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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Tuesday 18 June 1996

Mardi 18 juin 1996



Speaker  
Honourable Allan K. McLean

Président  
L'honorable Allan K. McLean

Clerk  
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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 18 June 1996

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 18 juin 1996

*The House met at 1333.  
Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### OBSTETRICAL CARE

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole):** The Minister of Health has announced he will restore the government's contribution towards malpractice insurance for Ontario's 23,000 physicians. I hope the minister's actions are not too late.

I asked the minister: "What took you so long? Why did you make women worry? Why didn't you listen to the advice you were given?"

Last December, over six months ago, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario warned you just where your actions regarding the removal of CMPA would lead.

Last month when I raised the issue of the obstetrical crisis you had created, I suggested that you immediately reinstate malpractice payments, yet it took you until today, June 18, to make this announcement. I guess when you're a hothead and you think you know all the answers, like the Minister of Health does, it is very difficult to take advice offered and to admit you made a mistake.

Minister, your dictatorial Bill 26 scrapped negotiations between the Ministry of Health and the Ontario Medical Association, but today you say that this announcement is the first step stemming from a renewed dialogue between the ministry and the OMA.

I only hope that the minister was not too late in understanding that if you want to have a good working environment, it is better to sit down with your partners and try and negotiate rather than arbitrarily imposing what you feel is best and then being forced to recant.

I hope the minister will learn from his mistakes and stop creating crises. I only wonder if your mistake on user fees for drugs and your arbitrarily imposed cuts to hospitals will wind up being an even larger crisis.

### LOVE TO READ WEEK

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** On June 7 I joined the grade 7 and 8 students at St Ann's school in my riding of Hamilton Centre to celebrate Love to Read Week, and as a team we created a top 10 list of why students in Ontario should learn to read well.

I want to advise my colleagues in the House that the students are watching today's session live in their classroom and I know you'd want to join me in welcoming them to the provincial Parliament here in Ontario.

The top 10 reasons why students in Ontario should learn to read well:

- (10) For your legal and personal protection.
- (9) To help you use your imagination.
- (8) For entertainment and fun.
- (7) To learn different things.
- (6) To extend our knowledge.
- (5) To know what's going on in the world.
- (4) Job and life skills.
- (3) To expand your vocabulary.
- (2) Writing and communication.
- (1) For a better education.

I want to thank the students: Melissa, Daniele, Don, Joseph, Ferdinand, Mark, Jason, Andrew, Nicholas, Anna, Stephanie, Nicole, Izabel, David, Anna, Kathy, Daniel, Cory, Amanda, Brooks, Luigi, Joseph, Kaila, Huy and Jennifer; and principal, Carolyn McCann; principal intern, Sandi Annibale; and the teacher in the classroom, Pat Codispoda.

I want to thank the students who are watching right now and the teachers for the opportunity to be with them. It was an excellent session and I know they've learned a lot by participating and appreciate the welcome that the members here have given them today.

### UNCLE TOM'S CABIN

**Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent):** A few weeks ago it was my pleasure to attend, along with the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism, the Honourable William Saunderson, the official opening of Uncle Tom's Cabin historic site in Dresden.

Rev Josiah Henson, a slave in the United States for the first 41 years of his life, escaped to Upper Canada via the Underground Railroad in 1830. With the aid of abolitionists and church groups, he was able to purchase 200 acres of land near Dresden where over the years he established a refuge for other fugitives of slavery.

Under Henson's leadership the British American Institute was established, Canada's first industrial school, dedicated to the advancement of slaves and others in the general population.

As many readers know, the life of Rev Henson provided the inspiration for the novel Uncle Tom's Cabin by Harriet Beecher Stowe.

Now operated by the St Clair Parkway Commission, the Henson home and other buildings on the site have been restored in recent years.

The restoration, complete with historic artefacts and improved facilities at the site to accommodate and educate visitors, has resulted in a significant increase in tourists at the location over the past three years.

I'd like to take this opportunity to encourage all members of this Legislature, indeed all Ontarians, to take some time this summer to visit Uncle Tom's Cabin in Dresden with their families, to see at first hand the importance of black history and culture in this province.



## IN-LINE SKATING

**Mr Robert Chiarelli (Ottawa West):** Members will know that Friday marks the first day of summer, the prime season for the fastest-growing leisure activity in North America, in-line skating or rollerblading.

Unfortunately, 80% of the growing number of injuries in this activity are to skaters not wearing full safety equipment.

This reality hit home with the recent tragic death of Carl Gillis, a young man of 26 years who died of massive head injuries after falling while in-line skating in Ottawa. Carl was not wearing a helmet at the time, a factor which quite probably could have saved his life. Our hearts go out to the friends and family of Carl, a respected staff member of federal cabinet minister John Manley.

It is my view we must do much more to promote proper education and provide more information to the public.

I have in my hand a video recently produced by the Canadian In-Line Skating Trade Association in cooperation with St John's Ambulance and others. Entitled Get in Line, this video includes important safety tips and promotes the use of full safety equipment and the selection of safe skating areas.

This valuable safety video should be widely circulated. I have therefore arranged to have it distributed to all members for their use, and I strongly urge the Minister of Transportation to initiate a province-wide in-line skating education program to help protect our youth.

1340

## MAGNETIC RESONANCE IMAGER

**Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside):** I must say, as an opposition MPP it has been a great concern of mine that this government makes announcements in our constituencies without notifying local members, without inviting local members to be part of those announcements. The latest announcement in Windsor where that was the case, where I was told less than 24 hours before the announcement was to be made, was by the Attorney General for the courthouse in Windsor which, in fact, is the courthouse that we had approved and was already under construction and this government put a halt to. This government put a halt to it, and now they're backing away from full funding of that courthouse.

Today it is my pleasure, because I know I won't be invited to the event on Thursday, to announce that the government will be reaffirming the announcement that our government had already made that an MRI will be funded with operating dollars in Windsor. This is a project that MPPs in the Windsor area have worked for for a long time as part of the reconfiguration announcement, and was funded by the previous government. The government's going to reannounce it on Thursday. The government will be putting \$150,000 into operating costs and the local community will be raising \$2 million for the capital.

I'm pleased to make this announcement today because I know the minister will be playing the typical Tory game and will not be inviting any of the local MPPs.

## DURHAM HUSKIES

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound):** I rise today to crush the fear of Ontarians that our great sport of hockey is picking up and moving south to warmer climates like Tampa Bay and Anaheim. In fact, hockey is alive and well in this province, especially in my riding of Grey-Owen Sound. To prove this, look no further than Durham where a new Metro Junior "A" franchise is preparing for its first season. The Durham Huskies have just been approved by the league and will start competing this fall.

Although the team may be new, the name isn't. In fact, the nickname "Huskies" is well known in local hockey circles and is a tribute to almost 70 years of hockey tradition in Durham.

The Huskies will be scouting local talent to fill this team. This should be an easy task, as the hockey talent pool runs deep in Grey and Bruce counties.

For the past seven years, the Owen Sound Platers of the Ontario Hockey League have been delighting fans with exciting hockey action. In fact, five Platers, including Kirk Maltby of the Detroit Red Wings, have moved on to careers in the NHL.

Owen Sound also has the Greys, who recently made it to the finals in midwestern Junior "B" hockey; and in Grey and Bruce counties the western Junior "C" league is booming, with seven teams competing in towns like Hanover, Mount Forest and Wiarton.

Other teams wooing fans belong to the Grey-Bruce Highlander Triple-A system, which operates across the two counties.

So I would like to congratulate the Durham Huskies for joining the proud tradition of hockey in Grey county. Skate hard and keep your stick on the ice.

## NORTHERN ONTARIO

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** The north is angry. They are finally listening to me and the other northern Liberal caucus members. Today, over 180 mayors and reeves from all across northern Ontario have been invited to meet in Sudbury to discuss ways to deal with the Harris government's unfair treatment of the north. These leaders have been drawn together, by necessity, by Sudbury mayor Jim Gordon, a former Tory member and cabinet minister.

This government does not understand how truly different the north is and how their unfair treatment of the north is hurting all northerners.

Northern Ontario has 31% less tax assessment per household than the south.

Unemployment in the north is 18% to 20% higher than the south.

Social and family services programs are 22% more costly in the north.

Winter control costs are 23% higher.

Storm sewer costs are 46% higher.

Parks and recreation service delivery is 57% higher.

Health service costs are 57% more in the north.

The mayors and reeves of northern Ontario realize the damage the Harris government is doing to our cities and towns and are angry over the Tories "Who Does What



Panel" because it has no elected northern members. Who better understands who should be doing what in the north than the elected representatives of northern Ontario?

It's time this government listened to the north. Change the composition of the "Who Does What Panel."

#### MALPRACTICE INSURANCE

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** I rise to comment on the decision of the Minister of Health that he would now be paying the premiums for the malpractice insurance for all physicians in the province of Ontario.

I can understand why the minister didn't make his announcement here in the Legislature because there would have been injury to ourselves as we fell off our chairs laughing at the minister. He's been told far and wide that what he should have done was waited until Chief Justice Dubin had made his report on the whole issue before he arbitrarily cancelled the government payment for those premiums. But no, no, this minister went ahead. He doesn't believe in consultation.

I've heard government members on the other side say: "We're not going to make the mistake the NDP government made of consulting with everybody before you made decisions. We know what we want. We're going to go ahead and do it."

Well, here's the Minister of Health; he arbitrarily made that decision, didn't consult with anybody, created a crisis for women in this province, entirely of his own making. He didn't consult on the appointment of members to district health councils all across the province, arbitrarily goes ahead and puts his hacks in those positions without consultation with the district health councils. He didn't consult with anybody when he made changes to the regulations on public laboratories in hospitals.

This is a good lesson, I hope, for the minister and I hope it's the last time he'll be allowed to create a crisis of his own making.

#### JIM ROBERTSON

**Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I rise in the House today to honour an outstanding teacher in my riding, Mr Robertson. Jim is a member of a team of educators which recently received Nortel's National Institute Award. This award is given to those who encourage interest in science and technology in Canadian schools.

Jim was instrumental in the creation of the NewsOntario project along with his counterparts from the city of London Board of Education and the Simcoe County Board of Education. Jim worked at Ingersoll District Collegiate Institute while creating the project and is presently on staff at Glendale High School.

NewsOntario gives students of all ages an opportunity to produce their own newspapers and newsletters via a province-wide computer network. Through this unique project, students become news gatherers, reporters, analysts, editors, typists, layout artists and publishers of their own publications. Not only do students write articles, they post them on the network to be shared across Ontario.

Through NewsOntario students are also able to access stories written by other students to use in their own school newsletters and newspapers.

Through this unique project students from the most isolated parts of the province can get up-to-date news information from schools throughout any of their ridings.

This project is an excellent means for students to not only learn more about their own communities and schools but across Ontario.

Jim has been recognized by Nortel for his efforts to improve the educational opportunities of our children. On behalf of all the residents of Oxford and throughout the province, I would like to congratulate him and all the members of his team for their efforts.

#### ANNUAL REPORT, OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table the annual report of the Ombudsman of Ontario, 1995-96.

#### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

##### ONTARIO WORKS

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services):** I'd like to bring forward to the House today this government's vision of the social services system of the future, one that invests in people and helps them to break the cycle of dependency on welfare.

Last week, we announced Ontario Works. Today, I'm announcing the supports that, together with our work-for-welfare program of community service, will help people receiving welfare get back to work.

The total Ontario Works package is built on a vision of people actively working towards becoming self-sufficient and full participants in the life of their communities.

There are three ways Ontario Works will help recipients get paid jobs. The first is a new approach for government that focuses on results — positive results for people on welfare. Job agencies will be contracted to help people on welfare find jobs, but they will only be paid when they produce results. That means recipients must be placed successfully into jobs.

The second will give people receiving welfare the support they need to find a paid job on their own.

Thirdly, my ministry will restructure existing employment programs to focus energy and resources to better serve people on welfare in getting jobs.

It comes back to our belief that we have to move social assistance in this province from a handout to a hand up. With the right supports, welfare recipients can find their way to self-reliance.

I'd like now to review some of the specifics. Under Ontario Works, job agencies will be paid a deposit of \$200 up front to find a job for a recipient. The deposit must be paid back if they are not able to place the person into a job. The job agency receives two more payments, one after the recipient has been working for three months and another after six months. The payment will be a percentage of the welfare savings realized. The job



agency will receive a maximum of \$1,200 for successfully placing a single employable person into a job.

1350

This is truly a new way of doing business in Ontario.

This government believes in small business, and we know many people on welfare have good ideas for their own businesses that would get them off the system.

Ontario Works will refer recipients with potential business ideas to agencies that specialize in helping entrepreneurs. These agencies will be paid only if they produce results and the recipient's business becomes established.

Through Ontario Works, recipients will also have access to the tools they need to find a job in the 1990s, including computers to generate résumés, fax machines and computer job banks.

The recipients will also be given the chance to participate in job clubs and workshops on ways to find the jobs or to get information about their local labour market. They'll also be referred to available job openings and have access to training staff who will be available to offer advice on finding a job.

Some recipients may need basic education or skills training. These people will be referred to proven basic education and training programs that are already available in their communities. Basic education could include taking courses to complete high school, improve language skills or upgrade reading, writing and math skills.

Skills training must be linked to jobs available in today's labour market. We will not support training for the sake of training.

We know only too well that many employment programs just have not got the job done. Ontario Works is not only a new way of doing business, it's a better way of doing business, because it meets the needs of welfare recipients.

Ontario Works will start up this summer in 20 municipalities that make up phase 1. Building on our experience, we will announce the second phase of Ontario Works this fall, and by 1998 the program will be fully implemented across the province.

Two years ago, we made a commitment to introduce a new vision for welfare for this province. We are delivering. The steps we are taking mark the beginning of the end of the cycle of dependency and new hope for people living on welfare.

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** I am somewhat perplexed to hear the minister talk of this being a new way of doing business. What you've announced today is clearly the rehashing of a program that has been in place in municipalities across Ontario. I'm pleased that the minister takes great pleasure, along with the minister's and the Premier's staff, in handing out campaign literature. Maybe I want to remind the minister as well that the program he's talking about already exists throughout Ontario.

Three years ago, when I was chairman of health and social services in Hamilton-Wentworth, we, along with the Minister of Community and Social Services, Tony Silipo, had a program in Hamilton called JobLink. Do you know what that did? It was a job club. It did exactly what you are talking about today as being a new way of doing things.

What you've acknowledged today is clearly a failure of any new ideas. What you've announced today is a failure of any new way of dealing with the welfare problem in Ontario. You have taken programs that municipalities have worked on over the years, that previous governments have worked on over the years, and repackaged them.

You talk about the 10 lost years, you love to do that, but you have no problem going back to the programs that worked in those 10 lost years, reintroducing them, repackaging them, and making it look like you're doing something to help welfare recipients. What you've announced today is a joke. It is an absolute joke. You have no new way of helping welfare recipients. You just continue to beat up on welfare recipients. You continue to perpetuate the myth that they're lazy and don't want to work, and you're going to fix them.

You understand clearly from what you've announced today that the failure of this government when it comes to dealing with welfare reform is clearly the failure of this government in relation to job creation. You again fail to understand that the way you deal with the welfare problem in Ontario is by ensuring there are jobs for welfare recipients. We have job centres; we have access to fax machines right now throughout this province for people on welfare; we have access to computer job links; we have access to photocopiers. What we don't have access to is jobs, and this is where you're failing once again.

It's interesting, as we see the announcement, to talk about the bounty you're going to pay to agencies. Two weeks ago, you and your senior hacks and flunkies denied that there was going to be a bounty, that there was going to be a headhunting fee paid. You denied that you were going to bribe agencies and the placing counsellors into placing people into employment opportunities. What do we see today? You're going to pay agencies a bribe of up to \$1,200 when they place an individual into a work setting.

Two weeks ago you said we were wrong. Well, you were wrong. You were wrong when you said welfare recipients could earn back their cuts. In effect, they weren't able to until we forced you to change your legislation. You were wrong when you said seniors and the disabled were not going to have their benefits cut. Still today there are 11,000 seniors and disabled who have had their benefits cut, and continue to, because you have not moved them into a protected category.

Minister, how can you sit there and justify a headhunting fee, how can you sit there and justify an outright bribe to municipalities, to agencies, to place individuals into programs? You have not put one cent into new training dollars for agencies. You have not put one cent into incentives for the private sector to hire welfare recipients. You've done none of that. All you've talked about is giving agencies 1,200 bucks if they can place somebody and displace a paid job. Then you have talked about painting swings and park benches and pavilions, again without really understanding the real welfare problem in Ontario today.

The minister thinks it's funny. The minister laughs. The fact that there are hundreds of thousands of welfare



recipients who are unemployed and want a job — this minister thinks it's funny. Minister, maybe you can point out to us today how many jobs this is going to create. Maybe you can point out today how many new opportunities there will be for welfare recipients.

You have once again failed. You've failed miserably. You've failed welfare recipients in Ontario. What you have done today is very simply repackaged old programs. You have no new ideas. You're totally bankrupt when it comes to finding new ways of dealing with the welfare problem in Ontario. Frankly, I'm flattered that you'd go back to your bag of tricks, pull out a program that we announced three years ago along with the provincial government, and use that as your big announcement. This is disgraceful and it's a shame.

**Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside):** It's a great disappointment that the minister, who says his government had this all envisioned and has been working on this for a year, comes before the Legislature last week and then this week — and today was supposed to be the overall solution. This was going to be the announcement that would link the philosophy of workfare with the actual workplace. And what has the minister announced today? He's announced JobLink, which was announced by our government several years ago. The Tories said it wouldn't work, couldn't work, they wouldn't support it, and that's exactly what they've put in place today.

The link between the workplace and the community and those who need assistance makes a lot of sense, but I don't know why the minister didn't have the courage to come here today and say, "It was the right thing to do. We're going to take what the previous government was doing, we're going to build on that and we're going to keep JobLink in place," instead of trying to be phoney and using all the statements that things are going to be done in a different way.

The other part of the announcement, where he says they're doing things totally differently than has ever been done before — take a look at Jobs Ontario Training. The fact of the matter is, the payments that are being made were made in stages. The difference between what this government has announced today is that they're going to give agencies money in order to place individuals in jobs that will last maybe six months. There's no guarantee that they're lasting or permanent jobs whatsoever. There's nothing that's provided in terms of direct on-the-job training.

There are no targets that are announced today in the 20 communities. How many people are going to be placed? How many jobs are going to be created? You don't tell us that at all. How much money is going to be saved? You're talking about only reinvesting the dollars saved. How much money is going to be saved? If you're going to do things in such a different way, why don't you come forward, why don't you just level with the people of this province and tell them that this has nothing to do with the real strategy, that this has everything to do with politics and the attack on the poorest people in this province?

The fact of the matter is, if the government was serious about getting people into the workplace, they would be looking at creating jobs. Let's take a look. When this

government was elected in June 1995, there were 504,000 people unemployed in the province and the unemployment rate was 8.8%. In May of this year, there are 526,000 people unemployed and the unemployment rate is 9.1%.

1400

The fact of the matter is that the underlying significant problem is job creation. This government's doing nothing about it at all. They're instead more interested in public opinion polls and a tax on the poor because they know it will deliver votes to them. It's sad.

This minister's incompetence on this file, this minister's incompetence on the file dealing with young offenders that's being raised in this House clearly shows he's not competent enough to be a minister. He should be out of cabinet and somebody who has compassion and a strategy to help poor people in this province should be the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** What a difference a year makes on what was Mike Harris's central plank in the election, that they had all the answers around workfare, around getting people back to work. We see today a pitiful announcement from the Minister of Community and Social Services that will do nothing to decrease the number of people who depend on social assistance in this province.

We have seen the very strong position taken during the election watered down to a point where the very best the minister can do today is to come in and announce diluted versions of programs we had put in place, and not even have the decency to give us the credit for the good things we did. He waters those down even more by ensuring that all he's going to do with his six months' work program is move people off welfare and on to the unemployment insurance rolls, so he's shifting off his responsibility to the federal government.

That's not going to help people who are on welfare. That's not going to help people who need to get support. What is going to help them are the jobs you promised to create, and that you are not creating, the 725,000 jobs you promised during the election, which are not coming, and the people of this province will be the worse for it.

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** Mr Speaker, point of order.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** The member for Sudbury on a point of order, briefly.

**Mr Bartolucci:** During the response to the ministerial statement, the member for Hamilton East was constantly heckled, Mr Speaker —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. There's nothing out of order. The member will —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Sit down. I've heard the member's point of order and he doesn't have a point of order.

**Mr Cooke:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The member had the courtesy to wait till after the statements to raise what is a legitimate point of order. Every day we're now having responses to ministerial statements where you keep order for the minister's statement and you let the Tory benches go wild in our responses.

**The Speaker:** Time for oral question period.



## ORAL QUESTIONS

### YOUNG OFFENDERS

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services. It again concerns the coverup surrounding the beating of youths at the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre.

On February 29, teenagers were beaten while they were in the custody of your ministry. You, Minister, did not order a police investigation until more than three months later. You've told this House the reason you moved so slowly to deal with the beatings at Elgin-Middlesex is because nobody told you what had happened. You say your deputy knew about the beatings, but didn't tell you. You say your staff knew about the beatings through phone calls from a parent, but they didn't tell you. You say the Deputy Minister of Community and Social Services knew about the beatings, but that minister now claims he wasn't told either.

So I want to again pursue the issue of who knew what. I ask you whether your acting deputy, your full-time deputy, or the Deputy Minister of Community and Social Services, any one of those, informed the secretary to cabinet, Rita Burak, about the beatings and whether Miss Burak then informed the Premier.

**Hon Bob Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** I've indicated — the Leader of the Opposition suggests we moved very slowly with respect to this matter — I think it's been indicated by the child advocate that everything that could have been done was done with respect to a response to the incarceration of young offenders in an adult institution and the concerns she had with respect to maltreatment of those young offenders upon arrival at Elgin-Middlesex. To suggest that there was some sort of slow reaction or coverup with respect to that, I think again I can simply advise her to have a chat with the child advocate, who once again has been saying this for at least two and a half weeks now, but the opposition parties, for whatever reasons, are declining to have that conversation.

With respect to any conversations that may have occurred related to the acting deputy minister and the cabinet secretary, I'm not privy to those sorts of communications.

**Mrs McLeod:** Minister, the question, a very straightforward question which you rather studiously avoided, was whether or not essentially anyone with political accountability, whether you, the Minister of Community and Social Services, or indeed the Premier, was made aware of what had occurred at Elgin-Middlesex.

Last Thursday, Minister, you appeared to be quite certain when you told this House that the Minister of Community and Social Services had been briefed on the beatings at Elgin-Middlesex. The minister now says that he was simply informed on March 4 that there had been a riot at the Bluewater facility for young offenders. I find that a very strange story, Minister, because the Bluewater riot occurred on February 29.

The Minister of Community and Social Services, on March 4, was called by a deputy minister who had just

been informed of the very shocking, very disturbing allegations of the beatings at Elgin-Middlesex. She called her minister to brief him on that fact and yet, in spite of the fact that clearly there was a potentially explosive situation, she chose to tell her minister only of a riot which had taken place some five days before and which everyone knew about. Surely even the minister had read about that riot in the newspaper.

Minister, last week, when you answered the question about when your colleague the Minister of Community and Social Services was informed about the beatings, it did not appear that you were simply talking off the top of your head; it didn't appear that you were making assumptions; in fact it appeared that you were reading from a very carefully prepared note, speaking on behalf of your colleague.

I ask you, Minister, on what basis did you make the statement last week that the Minister of Community and Social Services had been briefed on the beatings at Elgin-Middlesex and do you now know whether the Minister of Community and Social Services or the Premier or anyone with any political accountability was in fact told about this very shocking occurrence on March 4?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** Just to clarify the record with respect to a question from the member for Timiskaming, and I'll put it again on to the record — "What I want to know is, when did the Deputy Minister of Community and Social Services talk to your deputy minister, and when did the Minister of Community and Social Services talk to you about this incident?" — I indicated in my response that it was indicated in the letter from the child advocate that she had had a conversation with the acting deputy in my ministry and the deputy at Comsoc with respect to her concerns, and it was indicated to my office that the Minister of Community and Social Services was briefed. But I indicated in a scrum outside of the House that with respect to the details of that briefing and how extensive it was, they would again have to address those questions to the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Mrs McLeod:** This story just seems more and more incredible. The acting deputy for the Solicitor General knew about the allegations of the beatings, the deputy minister in community and social services knew about the allegations of the beatings, the Minister of Community and Social Services was briefed, but the deputy minister somehow forgot to mention that the beatings had taken place and would be in the report of the child advocate. Nobody, including the minister responsible — yourself, Minister — the Solicitor General, the minister of corrections, was told about this shocking disturbance.

Minister, I have to tell you that your claims to ignorance seem to be following a pattern. On three very sensitive, potentially explosive issues in your ministry, you have claimed that you are not responsible because nobody told you what was happening. You say that you knew absolutely nothing about the deployment of some 200 heavily armed OPP officers at Ipperwash, which resulted in a fatal shooting, and you claim ignorance even though your staff were present at a top-level meeting the day before the buildup of force took place. You've said that you knew nothing about the OPP riot squad being



called in and subsequently battering civil servants on the grounds of the Legislature, and now you say you knew nothing about the beating of teenagers at a correctional facility, a beating of young people within your custody, even though your deputy minister knew about it and even though your hand-picked staff knew about it.

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Minister, in all of these sensitive issues you have claimed ignorance. Time and time again your answer to questions is, "Nobody told me." We have to wonder how it is possible for you as a senior minister of this government to be so much in the dark on these important issues. Is this going to be the pattern for the future? Is your response on every sensitive, difficult issue in your ministry going to be: "Don't blame me. Nobody told me what was happening"?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I think again everyone who believes in due process should be offended by what the Leader of the Opposition has just said. She said I knew about beatings. Those are allegations and there's a police investigation under way. For two days in a row the Leader of the Opposition has found these people guilty as charged, without respect of due process.

In respect to the other suggestions that the leader is making reference to, she would be the first on her feet to condemn me and condemn this government if we in any way, shape or form involved ourselves in the operational matters of police services across this province. I think what I've said in respect to those is quite appropriate. It's a process that has been followed and has been respected by Solicitors General of various political stripes and of governments of various political stripes. It's a policy and a principle that I believe in and I would hope that members of the opposition continue to believe in.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** New question, the member for Timiskaming.

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** To the same minister, last week I asked you for the complete report of the child advocate's report on this matter. It was released to you and to the Minister of Community and Social Services. You responded, and I'd like to quote: "The Ministry of the Attorney General advised my office and me personally that it would be inappropriate, given the criminal investigation that is under way at the moment, that if we released the reports, that we may indeed jeopardize those investigations."

Yesterday, we learned that the superintendent of the Elgin-Middlesex institution released the report to the managers accused of those beatings. The child advocate has stated that she only released this report to the two ministries. The question is, Minister, how did the superintendent get that report, who gave it to him, and doesn't this release, like you have previously stated, jeopardize the police investigation?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I've indicated on a number of occasions that the responses of management with respect to the receipt of the report from the child advocate are a subject of the internal investigation. When those issues were raised related to the response of managers, I indicated that I was broadening the investigation and bringing in a senior counsel from the Ministry of the Attorney General to ensure that all of those very real concerns are

addressed by the internal investigation. That's part of the process.

**Mr Ramsay:** But Minister, this incident happened after you were informed of all of this and said you were taking charge of this, that you were not satisfied with how your officials were carrying out this and that you were taking charge. Minister, you've been grossly negligent on this and continue to be so. Day after day it's getting worse.

Minister, back to the Piper case: You wrote to the Speaker of the day of your concern about the lack of security of the records that the police wanted to investigate. I'll quote from your letter: "Surely it is reasonable and fair to expect that once it is decided and announced that the police will investigate a former employee's conduct on the job, his office would be sealed immediately to protect, to secure all possible evidence for said investigation." Those are your words, Minister.

We know on June 10 that the superintendent, George Simpson, objected to the police having access to his records. How is it that not only did you leave the institution's records unprotected, but also you did not instruct your staff to fully cooperate with the police investigation?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** As I've indicated in the House, I haven't changed my opinion with respect to the Piper situation or with respect to the concerns expressed related to this matter. That's why I have broadened the investigation to ensure that those kinds of allegations are looked at and thoroughly investigated. If indeed inappropriate actions were undertaken by managers, they will be appropriately addressed in due course.

**Mr Ramsay:** Minister, this situation is out of control. Your handling of this scandal is getting worse, not better. Your action, or lack of action, has potentially contributed to an obstruction of justice. You obviously no longer have control of what goes on in your ministry. While there is a police investigation as to the alleged beatings at the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre, there needs to be an inquiry as to how your ministry has handled this situation. Ultimately, the government is accountable to the people through this Legislature. Minister, I ask you today to refer this matter to a legislative committee for a complete legislative review.

**Hon Mr Runciman:** Again, I'll raise the issue that it's interesting that this particular member, whom I have some respect for, is raising this issue, given his own history in this ministry, the corrections side of this ministry. I quoted in the past about allegations that were raised that he was unaware of.

"I was not pleased with the history," said Ramsay. This is 1988. He immediately referred this to the Human Resources Secretariat for formal investigation. "Ramsay said he plans to issue another directive stipulating his office should be notified in writing whenever such allegations are received through the deputy minister's office."

In another column by Lorrie Goldstein: "Ramsay said he was depressed and horrified when he first learned of the allegations. 'Before this,' he said, 'I didn't understand how serious this is and what it can do to people.'"

**The Speaker:** New question, third party.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** My question too is to the Solicitor General. Minister, yesterday I raised



here in the House the very serious issue of managers at Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre who may be the subject of ongoing investigations having read the child advocate's report, a report which you have refused to release to the public because, as you have said a number of times, it may jeopardize the ongoing police investigation if details are known to potential witnesses and those under investigation.

When questioned yesterday, you refused to comment about this disturbing series of events, and today you seem to be suggesting that these are just allegations. But you, Minister, have received a letter from the lawyer who has been retained for the managers at EMDC in which he agrees and admits that those managers indeed did have access to that report and did read it. I assume you've had an opportunity to read that letter and also to read the letter signed by Mr Simpson, which clearly was sent to all the supervisory staff at Elgin-Middlesex, giving them access to the report and calling them to a meeting, presumably to discuss the ongoing crisis at EMDC.

Let's be really clear: I'm not asking you to comment on the ongoing investigation; that would not be appropriate. But surely you can tell us who authorized the release of this report to the very managers who are alleged to be the centre of this police investigation when it couldn't be released to anyone else. Did you know about that action? Did you authorize it?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** As I indicated in an earlier question from the official opposition, the responses of the management staff to the receipt of the child advocate's report are part of the internal investigation. We will act according to the reports that we receive related to that internal investigation. I'm not happy. I've indicated from the outset that I wasn't happy with the response of managerial staff. This is a problem that in my view has been systemic within the ministry of corrections for some period of time. We're going to address it, and we're going to address it quickly.

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**Mrs Boyd:** Minister, that's just not good enough, and no one is going to consider it good enough. The real issue here is that by your inaction, you're essentially condoning the actions of managers in reading what they knew to be a confidential report. It is yet another example of the fact that you're not aware of what's going on in your own ministry.

You are also the Solicitor General and part of your task is to protect the integrity of police investigations. How can you possibly suggest you are behaving in a competent way, as a minister who is the Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services, when you allow this kind of thing to go on in the middle of a very serious investigation?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I think the government has acted in a most responsible way with respect to all the concerns brought forward by the child advocate and the concerns raised in other forums with respect to the actions of managers in response to the receipt of the child advocate's report.

**Mrs Boyd:** Minister, I can assure you that had anyone else, any other minister in any other government or anyone else anywhere down the line in a ministry taken

the kinds of inaction you've done over this, you'd be screaming obstruction of justice, quite frankly. You would. And you did many times in your role as critic.

How many times do we have to raise the inappropriate actions of your ministry officials, and by you as the minister, before you finally admit you're just not in control of what's going on. The people of Ontario and the staff in your ministry don't have any confidence in you and you know that because we get copies of the letters they're sending you every day.

Yesterday, when questioned by the media, you said: "I think it was on the 30th. I think the Elgin-Middlesex folks received a copy of the report. I think it was delivered directly by the child advocate, but you can confirm that." In fact I did just that and I too, as my colleague from Timiskaming, have the assurance of the child advocate that only the deputy ministers in the two ministries involved received a copy of that report.

Those managers at EMDC now have had access to a confidential document and have had an opportunity to read the evidence against them before they are investigated by the police. They could establish alibis and prepare a defence as a result, and that is an obstruction of justice. These investigators cannot reach conclusions that anybody's going to have any faith in when the evidence may have been tampered with and may have been tainted prior to the investigation.

Again, how did this report make its way to the very managers who may be the subject of an ongoing investigation?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I've already answered that question in response to some of the other rhetoric. I think it's quite clear that the people of this province have a great deal more confidence in the way this government is going to respond to justice issues than they had in the predecessor government.

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mrs Boyd:** This is a new question to the same minister. Let's go back to another issue that is very similar and has very much to do with the same issue of obstruction of justice.

It's our understanding that managers at Elgin-Middlesex were directed — were directed — to gather ministry documents on the weekend of June 8 to prepare a report for you. It's been alleged that documents were shredded during that weekend while those managers were in the institution, and they point out quite clearly that those are allegations that haven't been proven.

By the way, it's also reported that these managers are begging to be released from that institution, to be reassigned elsewhere, and I have on numerous occasions raised with you concerns about the managers remaining at Elgin-Middlesex and have asked you to reassign them outside of the institution, not only for the good of the young people in that institution, not only for the public good in terms of an assurance that there is no further interference with the investigations, but also for their own good.

You must have known that your officials were gathering information on the allegations that young people had been beaten at Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre because the information was for a report to be written for you,



and in fact you told us on Monday, June 10, that you assumed that was what was going on and that you assumed those gathering that information had the authority from the ministry to do so.

We've asked you over and over again and you've refused to answer, so finally again, Minister, were you aware that managers who might be under investigation participated in this information-gathering session and did you approve it?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** No and no.

**Mrs Boyd:** It's getting worse, because you sounded quite calm and assured on June 10 that this was what they were doing. You told us, "Well, it's part of the investigation," and of course they were doing that. It's very interesting that you say you didn't know that. I understand that there are many different investigations going on into the allegations of ministry staff abusing people in the care of your ministry, but it is really a simple and direct question that we're asking you to answer: Is it your understanding, as it is ours, as it is alleged by those managers, that they were directed by the ministry to go into the institution and gather this information, and is it true that those managers objected to that exercise because they believed very strongly that it might be seen as an effort to interfere with the investigations?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** When the member for London Centre raised this issue some days ago, I shared her concerns with respect to the allegations. I indicated to her, and I've reaffirmed on subsequent occasions, that this is going to be very much a part of the investigation with respect to how managerial staff responded to the receipt of the child advocate's report. I take those allegations very seriously. Indeed, I'm not going to speculate on who directed whom in respect to these kinds of situations and what happened. This is part of an internal investigation, and I'm sure a former Attorney General will respect that investigation.

**Mrs Boyd:** As a former Attorney General and a minister in other ministries, I know very clearly how important it is to secure the evidence when there are serious allegations. I can give you example after example where that was the first concern and ought to be the first concern of a minister when informed of a critical incident.

You were informed on June 5, according to your information — which frankly becomes increasingly more difficult to believe — of all this sort of thing, and on June 8 and into June 9 those managers were there. They agree they were there. They say they were there at the direction of the ministry and they say they objected to being there because they felt it was inappropriate for them to be there, and they were still ordered to do it.

You cannot escape some responsibility for this. While you claim the cloak of ignorance, perhaps we can believe you didn't know, but you knew and you admitted you knew by June 5. Why on earth, as Solicitor General if not as Minister of Correctional Services, didn't you insist that steps be taken to protect and secure the evidence, or the possible evidence, and certainly the records in a very serious incident? It's beyond my belief that you did not know that those people were being directed to collect that information, but if you say you didn't know that, surely

you admit you should have known that. You should have been on top of this, you should have been securing those records and you should have been ensuring that there was no possibility that people would suspect an obstruction of justice. You are responsible, and you can't keep trying to avoid that. Will you do the honourable thing and resign?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** No.

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#### VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

**Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence):** I have a question for the Minister of Community and Social Services. It concerns a constituent of mine, Mr Jim Wade, a civil servant who was just terminated by the Ministry of Housing. Mr Wade has cerebral palsy. He had worked for the people of this province for the past 22 years. He had been supporting his wife and a granddaughter.

Twenty-two years ago, an enlightened minister of the then Progressive Conservative government of Bill Davis, the Minister of Social and Family Services, Mr Tom Wells, had the common sense to sponsor a vocational rehabilitation program that gave Mr Wade the opportunity to live and work in this great province. Why have you and your government terminated Mr Jim Wade and robbed him and his family of their future?

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services):** I believe I'm correct in hearing — it was hard to hear; my apologies, I just couldn't hear, but I think you said that this particular gentleman was working for the Ministry of Health, did you not?

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Are you answering the question or referring the question?

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** No, no. I didn't hear, Mr Speaker. If I could have the member repeat the question, because I really did not hear that part.

**Mr Cordiano:** I can't believe this. Do you want me to repeat the question, Mr Speaker? Okay.

I have a question for the Minister of Community and Social Services. If you would listen, it concerns a constituent of mine, Mr Jim Wade, a civil servant who has been terminated by the Ministry of Housing. Mr Wade has cerebral palsy. He had been working for the people of this province for the past 22 years. He has been supporting his wife and a granddaughter.

As I pointed out, 22 years ago an enlightened minister of the then Progressive Conservative government of Bill Davis, the Minister of Social and Family Services, Mr Tom Wells, had the common sense at that time to support a vocational rehabilitation program that gave Mr Wade the opportunity to live and work in this great province. I asked the minister why he and his government have terminated Mr Wade and robbed him and his family of their future. It's a simple question.

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** I suppose the part of that question that applies is the vocational rehabilitation program, because that gave this gentleman his start. We have not made any adjustments to that particular program. We are working right now with the disabled community to give them more opportunities to assist them to get to work.

**Mr Cordiano:** It is clear that the true and ugly face of the revolution has now been revealed, a revolution which has become a war against the underprivileged and the



vulnerable of this province. Mr Wade and thousands of other disabled people across this province have become the victims of your war. What the former Premier Bill Davis gave Mr Wade — the opportunity to work and the dignity that goes with a job — Mike Harris is now stripping away.

Mr Wade is desperate to work, but you and your government have refused to hear his plea, and now Mr Wade and his family are being forced on to welfare. Where's the common sense in this? Clearly this government is engaged in what can only be described as an effort at downsizing.

When are you going to show the people and your colleagues that you're not some sort of incompetent push-over of a minister, that you will stand up and clearly —

**The Speaker:** The question has been asked.

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will consider the source.

We have a number of programs right now to assist disabled people to get back to work.

**Interjection:** Workfare.

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** It has nothing to do with workfare, because workfare does not require people with disabilities to participate in the program.

Once again, we are working with the disabled community to provide them with a better range of employment programs to assist them back to employment. That's what I suggest, that we not only have the same programs, that we're looking at how to improve them and provide better programs for the disabled because they're demanding them right now.

#### YOUNG OFFENDERS

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** My question is for the Solicitor General and the Minister of Correctional Services. We understand that the superintendent of Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre, George Simpson, was reassigned on June 13 by letter by the deputy minister of your ministry. Can you tell us whether reasons were given to Mr Simpson for this reassignment and what they were?

**Hon Bob Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** I indicated yesterday that this is a delicate situation and I am not at liberty to discuss the details surrounding the reassignment of Mr Simpson.

**Mrs Boyd:** There are a number of suggestions as to why that might have happened. We're led to believe that Mr Simpson was reassigned because of comments he made regarding the alleged shredding of documents at the Elgin-Middlesex centre. On the other hand, we also understand that Mr Simpson objected to the procedures that were going on in your ministry around this investigation on the grounds that those procedures were damaging to the whole process and were in fact possibly damaging to the integrity of those investigations.

So it's rather important to know exactly why someone who was objecting to the very processes that frankly all of us are objecting to might have been reassigned, and whether there was another reason why he was reassigned or whether he was simply reassigned because he was objecting to the processes that appeared to be obstructing justice in your ministry.

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I can indicate clearly to the member that the reassignment had nothing to do with any objections Mr Simpson may or may not have had with respect to the other processes.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** The Minister of Housing has an answer to a previously asked question.

#### HOUSING CONSULTANTS

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I rise in the House today to respond to a question put to me on June 11 by the member for Cochrane South. I told the member I would look into the details of a situation whereby a manager in the housing ministry recommended that non-profit housing groups use the services of a particular private sector firm.

I'd like to advise the member that this issue has been investigated and appropriate action has been taken and we agree that it is totally inappropriate for ministry staff to recommend suppliers of goods or services to any non-profit housing group.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Supplementary, the member for Cochrane South.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** No supplementary, Speaker.

#### AGRICULTURE INSPECTION

**Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent):** My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Minister, in Bill 46 you've gutted the Farm Products Grades and Sales Act, you've cut produce inspectors by 80%. In the agricultural magazine the Grower you say that these changes were the result of your table talks and you go on to say that the bill reflects the input of the agrifood industry. Later in the same article, the executive secretary of the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association says that they are concerned "that the government didn't listen to the horticultural sector, which identified integrated pest management, advisory services and inspection as core business activities for OMAFRA." He goes on to say that the association told your ministry in February "that inspection services preserve orderly marketing, instil consumer confidence, prevent mislabelling of product and protect buyers and sellers from fraudulent activity."

Mr Minister, if the association representing the fruit and vegetable growers, who are most directly affected by this legislation, do not agree with it, tell me, whose input does this bill really reflect?

**Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** I want to thank the honourable member for allowing me the opportunity to set the record straight and indeed that food and safety in this province is not being compromised. Let me be perfectly clear: The government in no way has reduced its commitment to food safety. The role these inspectors have played was never one that was dealing with health and safety. The provincial Ministry of Health and the federal Department of Health have inspectors out there. What these inspectors were doing was taking random samples to establish any pesticide residues in order to advise farmers as to what pesticides they should be using and indeed what amount



of pesticide they should be using. It may have had some influence, but it was primarily the reason to advise farmers as to what materials they should be using when spraying.

**Mr Hoy:** Back home we don't turn on the manure spreader until we leave the building.

I'd like to point out that produce inspection not only protects the public from possible harm, but it protects the producers from fraud and hysteria. These inspections give the consumer the confidence that the produce they are purchasing is safe. When these safeguards are not there, the people who are hurt are the farmers themselves.

Mr Minister, how can you tell the consumers and the producers of this province that the government is no longer interested in ensuring consumer confidence in an industry for which this is so crucial a component?

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** I will reiterate that indeed the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs was taking random samples to establish the grading and the quality of the products used. When the member mentions about a manure spreader, the verbal effluent coming from over there would fill those manure spreaders.

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## WORKFARE

**Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside):** I have a question to the Minister of Community and Social Services. We already know from your ministry's 1995 study that 95% of all employable social assistance recipients were involved in either working full- or part-time, going to school, taking job training, doing volunteer work or searching for work. Even 41% of single parents were searching for jobs while 15% report they were also doing voluntary work.

Last month in Ontario there were more than half a million unemployed people actively looking for work. Right now, the Ministry of Education and Training is out briefing school boards about new requirements that grade 11 and 12 students will spend 20% to 40% of their time with work experience. We won't even mention community service work being done for inmates of correctional services.

I'd like to ask the minister a very simple question. Of the 54,000 social assistance recipients who are participating in the 20 workfare pilots, how many of these people will be placed by the end of this year and how much money are you going to save in welfare?

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services):** There are a number of people who were actually participating in a number of activities prior to this year, and of course the member knows that job search is mandatory under his government's policies as well. So I would assume that because it was mandatory to job-search, that they were job-searching and I hope it was a higher percentage than that.

But certainly we hope to have as many people from the 54,000 cases to work as possible, but it also depends a lot on the business plans. We're working with the various communities right now. That's part of what they're coming forward with, to indicate what the particular community placement programs are going to be and

what the employment and training programs are going to be as well. That's part of the business plans. That's because we're working with the communities. We're looking for community solutions and that's what's quite different about this program.

**Mr Cooke:** We know that when the minister goes to treasury board, he has to come up with numbers that say how much he is going to be paying for programs, how many people are going to be on social assistance, what he has budgeted for. So all of this garbage today that he doesn't know anything, he's been studying this for a year, he can't tell us how many of the 54,000 people are going to be placed, how much money's going to be spent on training and how much money's going to be saved is nonsense. What have you budgeted for? How many dollars are going to be saved and how many people are going to be placed?

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** I think we'd be willing to match track records of this government to yours any time in terms of welfare reforms.

We've indicated clearly that we're looking at a program that's going to cost about \$450 million over the three-year period, and this money is money we're getting from savings that we've gotten already from social assistance and redirection of the training dollars.

Clearly we have a mandated program here, and the program we're talking about today with the training programs are accountable programs that really are tied to success that in the event that people are successful in placing people back to work, they will get paid. In the event they're unsuccessful, they don't get paid. That's the big difference.

Clearly we've set out what the costs are. We are doing community planning, and the bulk of this does depend on the programs and resources and what the community demands.

## WINE INDUSTRY STANDARDS

**Mr Tom Froese (St Catharines-Brock):** My question is to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. There was a report last night on the TV news that indicated that Health Canada, the federal ministry that regulates food and drugs, is proposing to change the Food and Drugs Act regulations to raise the acceptable levels of pesticides allowed in wines. Minister, could you please inform the House of your ministry's position on these proposed changes as they affect wine consumers in Ontario?

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations):** I know the member for St Catharines-Brock, representing a good part of the wine country of Ontario, is extremely concerned about these kinds of issues. I'm pleased to inform the House that we've been following closely the developments in this area and the LCBO currently conducts tests on all products sold through the LCBO stores.

We are quite concerned about the proposed changes in the federal regulations as to new levels, whether or not they are appropriate. As a matter of fact, in one instance the proposed increase would allow 100 times more pesticides than are presently acceptable in wine products



sold in Ontario. However, under our particular act the LCBO has the authority to maintain stricter standards than those required by the federal regulators. Consequently, the province can set and maintain its own standards regarding allowable levels of these substances, and we intend to continue to do so.

**Mr Froese:** Minister, I understand the motivation behind these federal changes to the Food and Drugs Act is related to trade issues relating to GATT and NAFTA agreements. Doesn't this mean that Ontario will in turn be pressured to raise acceptable levels of pesticide residues in wine sold in this province?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** The primary concern of my ministry and the LCBO is that we provide products to wine consumers in Ontario that are safe and do not pose any health risk to the people in the long term. We feel it is better to proceed cautiously in these kinds of matters rather than jump out and allow these excessive increases in pesticides which would be in the wines we are serving the people.

The LCBO has found, not surprisingly, that wine is consumed much more frequently and in greater quantities than grapes and therefore the LCBO feels that the residue levels should be much stricter in dealing with this product.

Finally, I'm pleased to inform many members of the public and the House that the LCBO has stricter standards than the federal Food and Drugs Act in many, many areas, and therefore we don't feel this is a departure from that policy.

#### VIDEO LOTTERY TERMINALS

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** I have a question for the same minister, the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. This is concerning the act entitled the Alcohol, Gaming and Charity Funding Public Interest Act, which, as in so many of the acts coming from this government, doesn't mean what it says. But I would like to give this minister an opportunity to tell us about the slot machine proliferation plan for this province.

The Minister of Finance, in this minister's absence, talked about the amount of revenue being incidental to the needs of the deficit, and Mr Eves also referred on May 15 to the introduction of slot machines as going in only controlled environments, into racetracks and into charity sites. Yet on June 13 he's talking about any room that is not accessible to minors, and it seems like an escalation only in that one month, perhaps after the minister has done his calculations on his budget requirements.

As the minister responsible, could you tell this House and the public the real scope of slot machine activity, what you call VLTs, that you're planning for this province? What number of machines, what kind of revenue and how much increased gambling activity have you planned for this province under this act?

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations):** This legislation was introduced to meet an existing problem where we had some 15,000 to 25,000 illegal machines. We are trying to develop the introduction of these machines to fight those

illegal machines in a most measured and controlled manner, and I think we've outlined that in our policy by introducing them into very controlled atmospheres first. We will learn from that and then proceed on to the next step if those first experiments prove successful.

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**Mr Kennedy:** It's very evident that the minister is planning to fight this problem in every neighbourhood in the province, because that's what it's going to take, to have bars in every neighbourhood in this province, with slot machines, to meet some of the revenue projections this government is making: your statement to the Toronto Sun that there would be 20,000 machines in this province, and an average yield, based on the machines in Manitoba, suggests over \$400 million; the other statements of your ministry that all we're assured of is that the lowest per capita incidence of machines means we could have 40,000 machines in this province.

I refer you also to the budget document of the Minister of Finance that \$180 million will be going to charities in their 10% share. That suggests \$1.8 billion.

When we're talking about neighbourhood bars, the prospect of combining, for the first time in this province, alcohol and gaming side by side, this is already in your bill. People in the province need to know this, that this discussion of controlled environments means people who are drinking using these machines and spending the family groceries. Again I ask you to come clean and tell us exactly how many machines you have planned, at what rate, and what will happen in this province in terms of bringing gambling to every neighbourhood bar?

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** Do you know the answer, Norm?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** In fact, I don't know the answer to that question because the approach this government is taking is that we will only introduce these machines in a controlled atmosphere where they can be controlled, where we can ensure they are not being introduced and being played by minors. The fact of the matter is that's the approach we should take. We will say this: We will have fewer of these machines than the eight other provinces in Canada which legally have them, per capita, and therefore we will have fewer machines in our province than eight of the 10 provinces of Canada.

#### AGRICULTURE INSPECTION

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs to follow up on the question that was asked earlier. The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs has laid off 80% of the province's agricultural inspectors who used to check for pesticide residue on our fruits and vegetables.

At a time when people are worried about health and food quality because of recent problems with American strawberries, at a time when Europe is confronting huge problems with respect to food quality because of issues like mad cow disease, as the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, how do you justify, first of all, putting the markets of fruit and vegetable growers at risk, and secondly, putting a lot of doubt in the public's mind about the quality of food that's being produced?



**Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** I want to reiterate to the honourable member, and indeed to all members of this Legislature, that what the inspectors did was simply verify that the grades and standards of the produce were indeed what they were advertised as. They did some random sampling, and between 96% and 98% of the samples had well within the tolerable residues of pesticides and herbicides. The role of these inspectors was never one of dealing with consumer health and safety. The Ministry of Health and Health Canada are involved in those.

I want to make it perfectly clear that the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs was doing some random sampling, and it will continue to do that, with fewer people but they will continue to do that, to advise farmers as to the use of pesticides and the volumes. That was their responsibility.

**Mr Hampton:** I believe what we got from the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is that since they've laid off 80% of the fruit and vegetable inspectors, the province is less concerned about food quality and the province is less concerned about pesticide residue. That's what we just got from the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

The minister told the press, "Any individuals who feel that there may be a problem are welcome to send their samples in for testing." Is this the new regime in Ontario? Is this the new regime, that people who get food they don't think is up to quality, who get food they feel may have higher pesticide residues than is appropriate, that it's now their responsibility to send it in? Is the minister saying his ministry no longer has any responsibility for food quality or for ensuring that pesticide residues are kept within the limits? Is that what you're saying?

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** The honourable member does have some difficulty. When he uses California strawberries and mad cow disease, he is fearmongering. He is fanning the flames of mistrust. He is telling the consumers of Ontario, "Don't trust our food producers." We still have inspectors. They will still be monitoring and they will still be looking at the residues. The fanning of the flames of fearmongering, coming from these people, is simply saying that they do not trust the food producers of Ontario. The food producers of Ontario have a record I am proud to support.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** New question.

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** My question is to the same minister, the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Like my colleagues opposite, I think there's a concern across the province, particularly over the weekend when it was reported in the *Globe and Mail* with respect to the quality of pesticides used in California produce. This points to the need for some national leadership in this area. I wonder if the minister could tell the House the status of the 1995 federal budget. The federal Liberal government in Ottawa promised to move forward with a national food inspection agency to deal with all those involved in the production of food and the import and export of food.

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** The strawberry problem is very much that of American strawberries coming into Ontario.

Ontario strawberries are not on the market yet or are just now starting to come on the market. I can assure my colleagues that Ontario berries are very safe to eat, and yes, I will be going next week —

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** I want to hear this out of the other side of the mouth.

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** I'm simply trying to reassure the consuming public in Ontario that Ontario strawberries are very safe.

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** You fired all the inspectors. How do you know?

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** How do you know?

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** How do I know? Quite obviously the doubting Thomases over there want to fearmonger. How do I know? Simply, the American berries are inspected federally. Yes, they did come in with a problem, and that has been made public. If you're going to consume American berries, make sure they're very well washed. There is no problem with Ontario strawberries.

## NON-PROFIT HOUSING

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The minister has publicly stated that this ministry intends to sell off more than 64,000 public housing units. Very simply, I was wondering if the minister would update us on the progress of the sale and if the minister has encountered any problems in his dealings.

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** Actually it's 84,000 homes, not 64,000. Obviously, as the members can realize, it's an extremely complex situation. The federal government has advised us that it wants to get out of its housing program and it wants the province to take responsibility for the federal program. We want to take a look and see what effect that has on our plans. The staff are working on it now. There are certain units that would be easier to put on the market and give the current tenants the opportunity to buy. We're looking at that. We'll be bringing a more in-depth program forward in the fall.

1500

**Mr Sergio:** I appreciate the answer by the minister. However, I have to say that it's quite typical of a Conservative answer — without any factual data. I would like the minister to give some specific information, if it's possible. Is it not true that most of the units are built on municipally owned lands which are leased to the province at very low rates? Secondly, is it not true that many of the buildings were jointly funded by the federal government, which makes it an equal owner of the property?

It appears that the minister wasn't made aware of the situation until only recently. We on this side of the House would like to know when you were made aware of this. Secondly, I wonder if you would provide me with the details of the number of units involved, specifically the number of provincial units on municipally owned lands and the number of joint ventures between the federal and provincial governments. I would appreciate that information.

**Hon Mr Leach:** That's very public information. I'd be glad to provide the member with that information. There



are three or four categories. There is some public housing that is owned and operated jointly by the municipalities, the federal government and the provincial government. There are other projects that are operated just by the federal government and the provincial government, and others that are operated just by the provincial government and the municipal governments. There are also some that are operated solely by the provincial government.

The ones that we have control over we'll be dealing with in a certain way. On others we obviously have to negotiate with our partners in the project. We're doing that. We have ongoing negotiations with them. The numbers of the various categories are public, and I'm surprised that the member would have to ask for them. They've been public for years.

### MALPRACTICE INSURANCE

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** I have a brief question to the Minister of Health. It was with some amazement that I read his press release today announcing that he's going to pay the malpractice insurance for not just the obstetricians of the province but all doctors in the province. What astounded me was the opening paragraph in his press release, where he said, "Having succeeded in forcing a full review of the Canadian Medical Protective Association, Health Minister Jim Wilson today restored the government malpractice insurance...."

I would remind the minister that this review was announced on May 2, so I'm not sure what he's saying he forced anybody to do. It takes me back to the days of Larry Grossman when he had a deal with the doctors. He was accused of wrestling the doctors to the ceiling. This minister has set a new standard: He's wrestled them through the ceiling, into the attic and up on the roof, because not only has he given them a raise — I'm now speaking of the obstetricians — he's now picking up the malpractice insurance as well.

When is the minister going to learn from his mistakes of not consulting with anybody before he makes a decision, whether it's the doctors, the district health councils or the public labs in this province? He thinks that because of Bill 26 he can just go ahead and do everything he wants arbitrarily because he now has the powers. When is he going to stop creating these crises because he doesn't consult before he makes these important decisions?

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health):** The honourable member knows full well that I spend all of my time — I don't have a family; I don't have time to see anyone else — talking to doctors and health care providers, literally, although I'm happy to announce that I'm working on the family thing as we speak.

The fact of the matter is that there are few facts here that we have to put on the record, and that is that I spent five months consulting with physicians when I first became minister. In this House we said many times, and I wrote a letter to all the doctors in the province saying: "Look, there's a \$1-billion reserve there. It would be irresponsible for this government to pay a 20% increase, \$48 million into a fund that has no accountability mechanisms whatsoever." We asked for those accountability mechanisms.

Dr Stuart Lee, the secretary-treasurer of the CMPA, would not return our calls for five months. A funny thing happens, though, when you pull the money. All of a sudden everybody gets worried about the same things the government is worried about on behalf of the taxpayers of the province. So we went through that, and now the CMPA has agreed that Justice Dubin will do a full arm's-length investigation of the whole malpractice fund.

Secondly, the honourable member forgets to read the last paragraph — very, very important: finally, an indication from the government and the OMA that after having gone through this over the past few weeks and months, we are going to work together in a new era of cooperation. The OMA walked out on you in February 1995. We have them back at the table and we're working together to improve the health care system in this province.

**Mr Laughren:** Mr Speaker, I rise on a point of privilege. It perhaps could be construed by some as an apology to the Minister of Health, because I think perhaps over the last month or so I have not really understood why it was he created the crisis with the obstetricians. Now I understand.

**Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: Yesterday in the House the Premier of Ontario, Mike Harris, said in response to a question, "What I saw while I was at home not very well, perhaps having eaten strawberries at the wrong time...." Mr Speaker, he did not say US strawberries. There is no problem with strawberries in Canada, and if anybody's fearmongering, it's the Premier of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Order. Oral question period has expired. Motions. The member for Oriole.

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I'd like some clarification from the Minister of Health, who I believe made a ministerial statement instead of answering the question, that he has now recognized —

**The Speaker:** Order. The member take her seat. You can ask that question tomorrow. You'll get a clarification, I'm sure.

### PETITIONS

#### FAMILY SUPPORT OFFICES

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the centralization of the family support plan in Toronto will result in the closure of the Sudbury family support plan offices and a loss of 40 jobs to the regional municipality of Sudbury's economy; and

"Whereas access to the service of the family support plan will be more restricted for many social assistance clients with the introduction of a 1-900 telephone line; and

"Whereas the offices in Ottawa, Windsor, London, Whitby, Thunder Bay and Hamilton will be closed, resulting in a transfer in excess of 100 jobs and the permanent elimination of 78 employees; and



"Whereas the family support plan collected \$416 million in support payments in 1995, of which \$50 million was returned to the Treasurer of Ontario, and the annual operating costs of the family support plan are approximately \$23 million; and

"Whereas legislation and regulation can be introduced to make the program more cost-effective, such as the proposals included in the Sudbury support plan document;

"Therefore be it resolved that the Attorney General of Ontario be requested to review the business plan to centralize the family support plan in Toronto; and further, that we petition the Legislature of Ontario to cancel the centralization plan."

I affix my name as I agree with this petition.

### MINIMUM WAGE

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** I rise today to present a petition that was collected primarily by my constituent Genesio Paccioco in Sault Ste Marie, and it says this:

"Whereas the Progressive Conservatives are attacking the working poor by freezing the minimum wage; and

"Whereas this will bring hardship to the working poor and their families; and

"Whereas the Progressive Conservatives make no mention in their Common Sense Revolution about this; thus this government has no mandate to freeze the minimum wage,

"Therefore we, the undersigned, request that the Premier and the Minister of Labour repeal the freeze and increase the minimum wage to \$7.50 an hour. If this is not acted upon in a reasonable time, the Premier and the Minister of Labour should resign from their positions and call an election."

This is signed by a number of people from the Sault, not least among them Tony Zimbarro, who also helped in collecting it from 43 Henrietta Street. Also, if anybody wanted to speak to Genesio about this, he's in the visitors' gallery today and will be in my office, 325-4014, afterwards. I present this to you and sign my own name to it.

1510

### JUSTICE SYSTEM

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre):** I'm presenting this petition on behalf of the member for Simcoe West. It is addressed to the assembly of Ontario and reads:

"The undersigned wish to see a revision of the judicial system, which we do not think reflects the rights of the victim in dispensing justice.

"(1) We request that the criminal receive sentencing which adequately reflects the nature of the crime in cases of sexual assault. We have enclosed examples of sentencing which insult the intelligence and integrity of the victim and further violate the victim who has had the courage to go to court.

"(2) We request that reliable statistics in comparable sentencing be made part of the judicial process across Canada. In other words, sentencing of criminals is not

made at the discretion or on an ad hoc basis by the presiding judge.

"(3) We request that the judicial process be made as simple and as straightforward as possible, without delays and, especially where children will be required to testify, that they have adequate support and that the use of videotape testimony be allowed as evidence. Crime victims are not on trial and are victimized until proven otherwise.

"(4) We request that the media be allowed to publish the names of known sexual offenders as long as the victims sign an informed consent release which would not allow them to sue the media for damages.

"(5) We request that the victims of sexual assault receive automatic compensation from the criminal or, failing that, the victim compensation fund, so that the victim is spared the indignity of having to file a civil lawsuit for compensation for pain and suffering.

"(6) We request that the victim be present during any appeal process when the victim feels that the offender's sentence was unjust or inadequate."

There are more than 100 signatures attached hereto, and I put my signature to it.

### LIQUOR CONTROL BOARD OF ONTARIO

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** The petition reads as follows:

"To the government of Ontario:

"Whereas the government of Ontario appears to be moving towards the privatization of retail liquor and spirits sales in the province; and

"Whereas the LCBO provides a safe, secure and controlled way of retailing alcoholic beverages; and

"Whereas the LCBO provides the best method of restricting the sale of liquor to minors in Ontario; and

"Whereas the LCBO has an excellent program of quality control of the products sold in its stores; and

"Whereas the LCBO provides a wide selection of product to its customers in modern, convenient stores; and

"Whereas the LCBO has moved forward with the times, sensitive to the needs of its customers and its clients; and

"Whereas the LCBO is an important instrument for the promotion and sale of Ontario wine and thereby contributes immensely to the grape-growing and wine-producing industry;

"Therefore, be it resolved that the government of Ontario abandon its plan to turn over the sale of liquor and spirits over to private liquor stores and retain the LCBO for this purpose."

I present this petition from Ashley Snell of St Catharines who attends Dalewood public school in the north end of St Catharines.

### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have further petitions to add to the thousands I've already presented from workers concerned about this government's attack on workplace health and safety. This is



from the United Steelworkers of America, Local 7135, in my home town of Hamilton.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas it is vital that occupational health and safety services provided to workers be conducted by organizations in which workers have faith; and

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers have provided such services on behalf of workers for many years; and

"Whereas the centre and clinics have made a significant contribution to improvements in workplace health and safety and the reduction of injuries, illnesses and death caused by work;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode the structure, services or funding of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers.

"Further we, the undersigned, demand that education and training of Ontario workers continue in its present form through the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and that professional and technical expertise and advice continue to be provided through the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers."

I affix my signature in support.

#### NON-PROFIT HOUSING

**Mr Ed Doyle (Wentworth East):** This petition reads:

"We, the undersigned tenants of Stoney Creek Non-Profit Housing Corp, a community of seniors, families and single persons, including those with special needs, are concerned that:

"(1) Our homes will be lost because of the government's cuts to non-profit housing projects which will undermine their financial viability; and

"(2) Low-income families and the most vulnerable in our communities will suffer devastating hardship because of cuts to the number of needy people receiving rent-geared-to-income assistance, and the increased rents for those currently receiving such assistance.

"We call upon you to stop these government actions that seriously jeopardize our futures and the ongoing viability of our non-profit housing communities."

#### INJURED WORKERS

**Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall):** I have a petition to the Legislature of Ontario.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario to reject the Harris government's proposals to attack injured workers of Ontario.

"We, the people of Ontario, did not intend to vote against our neighbours. We want to build a better community. Injured workers are a part of the community.

"We say no to the Harris plans to cut injured workers' benefits; cut injured workers' pensions and future economic loss (FEL) payments; introduce a waiting period for benefits after injury; refuse compensation for disabilities like repetitive strains and occupational diseases; shift the responsibility from the WCB and employer to the tax-

payer; and privatize the WCB at the expense of the injured worker and the public.

"We call on the Harris government to solve the WCB's problems without attacking injured workers.

"The government must put an emphasis on a safer workplace and stop rewarding employers who ignore work hazards; give injured workers the right to rehabilitate and return to meaningful work; give all workers the protection of workers' compensation, especially at the banks, which must finally start paying their fair share; and hold employers accountable for evading their WCB obligations.

"Give workers and injured workers at least an equal say in the system."

I've signed the petition.

#### SERVICES DE SANTÉ ET DE SÉCURITÉ AU TRAVAIL

**M. Tony Silipo (Dovercourt) :** J'ai une pétition qui s'adresse à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario.

"Attendu qu'il est crucial que les services de santé et de sécurité au travail à l'intention des travailleuses et des travailleurs soient fournis par des organismes auxquels les travailleuses et les travailleurs font confiance ;

"Attendu que les Centres de santé et de sécurité des travailleuses et des travailleurs, CSST, et les Centres de santé des travailleurs de l'Ontario, CSTO, assurent ces services de façon fort efficace depuis plusieurs années ;

"Attendu que le CSST et le CSTO ont fait une contribution importante aux améliorations en matière de santé et de sécurité au travail et à la réduction des blessures, des maladies et des décès liés au travail ;

"Nous, soussignés, soumettons la présente pétition à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario et l'engageons à rejeter toute initiative visant à affaiblir la structure, les services ou le financement des Centres de santé et de sécurité des travailleuses et des travailleurs ou des Centres de santé des travailleurs de l'Ontario ;

"En outre nous, soussignés, exigeons que des services d'éducation et de formation des travailleuses et des travailleurs de l'Ontario continuent à être offerts sous leur forme actuelle par les Centres de santé et de sécurité des travailleuses et des travailleurs et que des conseils professionnels et techniques continuent à être offerts par les Centres de santé des travailleurs de l'Ontario."

Cette pétition nous parvient de beaucoup de citoyens de Hearst, Mattice et Kapuskasing et je l'appuie. J'y ajoute ma signature.

#### DRINKING AND DRIVING

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** I have yet another petition signed by residents from all over my constituency of Nepean, some 40 in this one.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas drinking and driving is the largest criminal cause of death and injury in Canada;

"Whereas every 45 minutes in Ontario a driver is involved in an alcohol-related crash;

"Whereas most alcohol-related accidents are caused by repeat offenders;



"Whereas lengthy licence suspensions for impaired driving have been shown to greatly reduce repeat offences;

"Whereas the victims of impaired drivers often pay with their lives while only 22% of convicted impaired drivers go to jail, and even then only for an average of 21 days;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We urge the provincial government to pass legislation that will strengthen measures against impaired drivers in Ontario."

I have affixed my own signature thereto.

1520

### EDUCATION FINANCING

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** I have a petition signed by hundreds of people to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, which reads:

"Whereas the government of Ontario has embarked on a program to reduce the expenditures for education in the province,

"We, the undersigned, wish to state:

That we are opposed to the reductions in funding for schools across the province;

"That we believe that these reductions will affect classrooms across the province;

"That educational spending is a most important investment in the future of all the citizens of the province and needs to be redressed."

I submit this petition, which would include my signature as well.

### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** I have a petition here that's signed by hundreds of workers, submitted to me by OPEIU, Local 166, in Kapuskasing and also from the IWA, Local 1-2995, in Kapuskasing. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly.

"Whereas it is vital that occupational health and safety services provided to workers be conducted by organizations in which workers have faith;

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers have provided such services on behalf of the workers for many years;

"Whereas the centre and clinics have made a significant contribution to improvements in workplace health and safety and the reduction of injuries, illnesses and deaths caused by work;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode the structure, services or funding of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers.

"Further, we, the undersigned, demand that the education and training of Ontario workers continue in its present form through the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and that its professional and technical expertise

and advice continue to be provided through the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers."

I affix my signature to the petition.

### FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

**Mr Bill Grimmett (Muskoka-Georgian Bay):** I have a petition on behalf of the member for Simcoe East. In accordance with the standing orders, I'll summarize it. This petition relates to the interaction of the freedom of information and privacy act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It's signed by one constituent in the riding of Simcoe East.

### BEAR HUNTING

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** I have a petition that reads:

"To the Parliament of Ontario:

"Whereas bears are hunted in the spring, after they have come out of hibernation; and

"Whereas about 30% of the bears killed in the spring are female, some with cubs; and

"Whereas 70% of the orphaned cubs do not survive the first year; and

"Whereas 95.3% of the bears killed by non-resident hunters and 54% killed by resident hunters are killed over bait; and

"Whereas Ontario still allows the limited use of dogs in bear hunting; and

"Whereas bears are the only large mammals hunted in the spring; and

"Whereas bears are the only mammals that are hunted over bait; and

"Whereas there are only six states in the United States which still allow a spring hunt,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to amend the Game and Fish Act to prohibit the hunting of bears in the spring and to prohibit the use of baiting and dogs in all bear-hunting activities."

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### DELZAP CONSTRUCTION LIMITED ACT, 1996

Mr Murdoch, on behalf of Mr Stockwell, moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr62, An Act to revive Delzap Construction Ltd.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

#### BANK OF NOVA SCOTIA TRUST COMPANY ACT, 1996

Ms Bassett moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr63, An Act respecting the Bank of Nova Scotia Trust Company, Montreal Trust Company of Canada and Montreal Trust Company.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

We have two deferred votes. By unanimous consent, there will be a five-minute bell. Call in the members.

*The division bells rang from 1525 to 1530.*



SAFETY AND CONSUMER STATUTES  
ADMINISTRATION ACT, 1996

LOI DE 1996 SUR L'APPLICATION  
DE CERTAINES LOIS  
TRAITANT DE SÉCURITÉ  
ET DE SERVICES AUX CONSOMMATEURS

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 54, An Act to provide for the delegation of the administration of certain designated statutes to designated administrative authorities and to provide for certain limitation periods in those statutes / Projet de loi 54, Loi prévoyant la délégation de l'application de certaines lois désignées à des organismes d'application désignés et prévoyant certains délais de prescription dans ces lois.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Will the members take their seats, please. We're dealing with second reading of Bill 54 standing in the name of Mr Sterling. All those in favour will please rise one at a time until their name is called.

**Ayes**

Arnott, Ted	Grimmett, Bill	Preston, Peter
Baird, John R.	Guzzo, Garry J.	Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Barrett, Toby	Hardeman, Ernie	Ross, Lillian
Bassett, Isabel	Hudak, Tim	Runciman, Bob
Beaubien, Marcel	Jackson, Cameron	Sampson, Rob
Boushy, Dave	Johns, Helen	Shea, Derwyn
Brown, Jim	Johnson, Bert	Sheehan, Frank
Carroll, Jack	Johnson, David	Skarica, Toni
Chudleigh, Ted	Johnson, Ron	Smith, Bruce
Clement, Tony	Jordan, Leo	Spina, Joseph
Cunningham, Dianne	Klees, Frank	Sterling, Norman W.
Danford, Harry	Leach, Al	Stewart, R. Gary
DeFaria, Carl	Leadston, Gary L.	Tascona, Joseph N.
Doyle, Ed	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tilson, David
Ecker, Janet	Murdoch, Bill	Tsubouchi, David H.
Fisher, Barbara	Mushinski, Marilyn	Turnbull, David
Flaherty, Jim	Newman, Dan	Villeneuve, Noble
Ford, Douglas B.	O'Toole, John	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Fox, Gary	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Wilson, Jim
Froese, Tom	Palladini, Al	Witmer, Elizabeth
Galt, Doug	Parker, John L.	Wood, Bob
Gilchrist, Steve	Pettit, Trevor	Young, Terence H.

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one at a time.

**Nays**

Agostino, Dominic	Cooke, David S.	McGuinty, Dalton
Bartolucci, Rick	Cordiano, Joseph	McLeod, Lyn
Bisson, Gilles	Crozier, Bruce	Miclash, Frank
Boyd, Marion	Curling, Alvin	Morin, Gilles E.
Bradley, James J.	Gravelle, Michael	Patten, Richard
Brown, Michael A.	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Caplan, Elinor	Kennedy, Gerard	Pouliot, Gilles
Chiarelli, Robert	Kormos, Peter	Pupatello, Sandra
Christopherson, David	Kwinter, Monte	Ramsay, David
Churley, Marilyn	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sergio, Mario
Cleary, John C.	Laughren, Floyd	Silipo, Tony
Colle, Mike	Marchese, Rosario	Wildman, Bud
Conway, Sean G.	Martel, Shelley	Wood, Len

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 66, the nays are 39.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations):** The justice committee.

**The Speaker:** Is it agreed that Bill 54 goes to the justice committee? Agreed.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE RATE  
STABILITY ACT, 1996

LOI DE 1996 SUR LA STABILITÉ  
DES TAUX D'ASSURANCE-AUTOMOBILE

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 59, An Act to provide Ontario drivers with fair, balanced and stable automobile insurance and to make other amendments related to insurance matters / Projet de loi 59, Loi visant à offrir une assurance-automobile équitable, équilibrée et stable aux conducteurs ontariens et à apporter d'autres modifications portant sur des questions d'assurance.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Now we're dealing with Bill 59, second reading, standing in the name of Mr Eves.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry for second reading?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All opposed, say "nay."

The members are here. Do we have unanimous consent to proceed with the vote? Agreed. Would it be the same vote? Agreed.

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 66; the nays are 39.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading? Agreed.

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE,  
FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS  
STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1996

LOI DE 1996 MODIFIANT DES LOIS  
EN CE QUI CONCERNE  
LE MINISTÈRE DE L'AGRICULTURE,  
DE L'ALIMENTATION  
ET DES AFFAIRES RURALES

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 46, An Act to amend or revoke various statutes administered by or affecting the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and to enact other statutes administered by the Ministry / Projet de loi 46, Loi modifiant ou abrogeant diverses lois appliquées par le ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ou qui touchent ce ministère, et visant à édicter d'autres lois appliquées par le ministère.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Mr Hampton had the floor last.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** Mr Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent that I take the place of the member for Rainy River for the opening speech.



**The Speaker:** Is it agreed that the member for Cochrane South continue with the debate? Agreed.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Bisson:** I will allow the members of the chamber to organize themselves into a little bit of more quiet around here, I guess.

I'm glad today to be able to participate in the debate. It is with pleasure that I have the opportunity today to be able to speak on this bill, as it has a number of effects and consequences, I would say, to the agricultural industry of northern Ontario.

I think a lot of members of this assembly, and I would say probably generally a lot of people within the population of Ontario, sometimes take for granted that the farming industry is mostly located in southern Ontario and that the north may, in the minds of some, not play a very large role when it comes to the question of the agricultural business of this province. I can say, Mr Speaker, as I'm sure you understand and other members of this assembly do, that the north has, through the communities of Earlton and Sudbury and Timmins and Rainy River and in around Thunder Bay and Sault Ste Marie and Manitoulin, various large and very prosperous farmers in those communities. In fact, a number of communities in northern Ontario are agriculture communities, as you would well know.

There has certainly been a lot of interest in regard to this, which I would consider another omnibus bill on the part of the government bringing forward a number of what the government would call housekeeping orders when it comes to how the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs deals with farmers and farm issues across the province of Ontario.

I just want to say at the outset of this debate that there are some farmers and there are a number of people within our party, and I'm sure the other opposition party — that there are some things in this bill, quite frankly, that need to be done, and those we will support and we will work with the government on. But there are other directions that the government is taking in this bill in regard to a number of initiatives and repeals of certain acts that are going to have an effect on the farm community and will have an effect on farmers in this province, and I will say not a positive one. I will deal mostly with those. I think the positive ones speak for themselves.

I'm here to bring the concerns of the people of northern Ontario and the constituents of Cochrane South, and I want to do that. In the 52 minutes that I have to bring that forward, I'm going to limit my comments to those particular things.

I guess the first point I would want to make is the whole question of what's happened to the budget of the Ministry of Agriculture. You will know that the Ministry of Agriculture, under the previous government, the New Democratic government of Bob Rae, was headed by Minister Elmer Buchanan, who was a tireless worker. Most people would recognize that Minister Buchanan was commented on, by many people in the farm community, as being the most progressive and hardest-working minister they had seen in a long, long time in the province of Ontario. This is not to take away from our current Minister of Agriculture, but I think he walks into a

ministry and, quite frankly, into the shoes of a minister who really worked hard at protecting and speaking out on behalf of farmers.

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I think the farm community looked at this government being elected in 1995 because a lot of farmers politically are of a Conservative stripe. Party politics being what it is, a lot of farmers would understand that you vote with the people you belong to, and they voted for the Conservative government in the belief that the farming community would be well served under a Conservative government. They didn't believe that electing a Conservative government would change negatively the initiatives that the NDP government had put in place; in fact, they felt a Conservative government would be fairly sympathetic.

But I can tell you, speaking to farmers across my communities, through Iroquois Falls, through Matheson and Timmins, through Earlton, which I drive through every week to get to Queen's Park, and various farming people in northern Ontario in around the Sudbury area, they're finding in effect that they're being somewhat surprised by the outcomes of what this government has done when it comes to agriculture.

I guess the first thing, where the rubber meets the road, is that the commitment of farming is based upon two facts. A person looking at the Ministry of Agriculture will say, "In regard to policy and the implementation of policy, is the government serious?" Another way you're able to gauge the seriousness with which the government takes the issues of farming is by the funding of that ministry.

You will know that since this government came to power it has cut literally millions of dollars from the budget of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and this after the Premier of the province, prior to becoming the Premier, as a member of the third party and the leader of that party, travelled and made promises to the people in the agricultural community that agriculture would not be touched.

If you voted for the Conservative government, they would slash all those other budgets, would cut welfare payments — yes, they said they'd do that — would cut unnecessary program spending in all kinds of ministries, from the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, to the ministry of tourism, to the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. They would touch all those other budgets, but they took great pains, the third party, the Conservative party of the day, with trying to reassure and making promises to farmers of this province that they would not — I repeat not — touch the budget of the Ministry of Agriculture. That was sacrosanct, that was the holy of holies, that was the one thing the Conservatives of the day, in third place in this House, said they would not touch. That was one. Others were obviously health care and education, but that's for another debate.

But what did they do upon coming to government? Some people would say they lied. I can't say that here in the assembly. That would be unparliamentary. But certainly the government has moved in a completely different direction than what they promised during the election of 1995 and what they promised the people of this province prior to that election. They promised they



would not cut the Ministry of Agriculture, and what do we find?

In July 1995, the ink hadn't even dried on the cabinet documents that swore in the ministers of the crown when the ministry announced a cut of some \$13 million from the Ministry of Agriculture. The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs himself had not been sworn in for more than 60 days, and what is one of the first things he does? He offers on the altar of the Conservative government the Ministry of Agriculture budget as his way of taking part in the Common Sense Revolution's economic agenda. That, after he said and his party said — because he was also a member of this assembly between 1990 and 1995 — that they would not touch the Ministry of Agriculture.

Sure, the Minister of Agriculture went around the province and said: "Don't worry. It's only \$13 million. We can find it in efficiencies. We're not cutting. We're not going to cut the Ministry of Agriculture any more. These are all things we can absorb within the Ministry of Agriculture budget." I was told by certain farmers in the north, "Oh, well, it's only \$13 million, and the minister assures us that they can deal with that without affecting programs that are so necessary to the farm community and to farm businesses across this province."

I remember talking to my friends in Matheson, farmers who operate various farms in the Matheson area and in Timmins, who told me: "Gilles, you're a nice guy, but the Conservatives, that's where I've been at; my family's voted Tory all these years. And it's only \$13 million, and that can be absorbed." I said: "Well, watch. This government is bent on the idea that they are going to dismantle many of the services we take for granted in this province because they don't believe government has a role to play when it comes to public services. You watch. You think you're protected at the Ministry of Agriculture? I would bet" — I said that in July 1995 to my friends in the farm community — "that the government would cut again."

What happened in November? Minister Eves came to the House and made a statement of finances to this Legislature. What did we find inside that statement? Yet another cut to the Ministry of Agriculture.

I remember the election. Do you? Most people who are watching this debate remember the election. "Not a cut to agriculture" was said in the election. Mike Harris swore on the holy of holies that he would not cut the Ministry of Agriculture, yet when this budget statement came in, in the fall of 1995, in November, what was contained in that little document? Yet another cut to the Ministry of Agriculture — \$13.1 million. Now we're up to \$26 million. The minister said in November: "Don't worry, you farmers. Don't worry, people in the farm community. We can absorb these cuts. We can deal with them in efficiencies, efficiencies, efficiencies, efficiencies. Don't worry. Everything's fine. Trust me. Don't worry."

What happened? Yet another budget cut in April. We're getting pretty thin here in the amount of money left at the Ministry of Agriculture. We're getting pretty thin as to how many efficiencies can be found, because the reality is that the Ministry of Agriculture, under the NDP government of Bob Rae, like every other ministry, had been going through for a period of three to four years

a restructuring to save dollars. That ministry had not got an infusion of new money over a three- or four-year period and in fact had lost some money as part of the restructuring we were doing as a government under the social contract. The ministry was already fairly lean when the Conservative government took power, because our government under the New Democrats had, as part of our cost-cutting measures in regard to the restructuring plans of our government, dealt with a lot of issues at the Ministry of Agriculture.

I remember the today Minister of Agriculture standing up in this House in opposition and chastising the Minister of Agriculture of the NDP government and saying: "Oh, the NDP can't do that to the Ministry of Agriculture. You cannot impose the social contract on the employees within that ministry because it's going to affect the delivery of services to the farm community. It cannot be part of any cost measures in regard to the NDP government. If we get elected, we'll never do that."

In the budget of 1996 what did we find? We found yet another cut — \$56.7 million. Altogether we have \$56.7 million plus \$26.1 million that has been cut up to date in the Ministry of Agriculture. How is the Ministry of Agriculture going to be able to deliver the programs to the farm communities of the farmers in northern Ontario and all over this province without the dollars to deliver those programs? Because there won't be any programs is part of the answer, and the other answer is that there won't be any staff, because most of the staff within the ministry are also being laid off.

You would know that in the budget statement of the Ministry of Agriculture back in May or April of this year, when the business plans were announced in this House, of 1,850 employees within the Ministry of Agriculture, 954 of those employees were going to get pink slips — half — gone, finis, partis. How is the Ministry of Agriculture going to be able to deliver those services? They won't. They can't. They won't have the staff and they won't have the dollars.

I come back to that party in third place in the Parliament of 1990-95, the Conservative Party of that date. I remember them so well. They stood in this House and said: "We will not touch agriculture. We make a solemn pledge. We promise agriculture will not be touched." We find out the Conservatives are sheep in wolves' clothing —

**Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton North):** Wolf in sheep's clothing.

**Mr Bisson:** Something like that. It sounded good anyway. But the point is, we're finding out that they're really chameleons — very good — when it comes to how they operate in opposition to how they operate in government. They told people in opposition that agriculture would not be touched and, as a consequence, a whole bunch of rural members were elected across the province on the basis of the pledge and promise made by the then leader of the third party, Mike Harris, and the then critic of agriculture.

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What do we get now? If was a rural member in the Conservative Party, I think I would say, "Well, I've got a pretty good base of vote and support in my riding,



because it's voted Tory for all those years." But I can tell you, that base of support will erode.

You're not seeing it all today, I'll tell you. I was out in communities along Highway 401 all the way up to Cornwall doing some work in regard to my critic's portfolios, and I've talked to a number of people within those farm communities, and there's a lot of them who are still Conservatives, but they're wary, and they're saying, "Listen, these guys told us they were going to protect us, and we're getting it in the ear." And you say to them: "Well, listen, you've been voting Tory for all these years. If they run another Tory and they put a bell around his neck and they run him down to the ballot box, are you going to vote for him?" They say: "Well, I don't know. They're going to have to prove to me that the faith I put in them in the election of 1995 could be repaid." They really wonder, with the cuts that have been happening at the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, how that could be done. That's only the first part.

We know the commitment to the Ministry of Agriculture and this government towards farmers of this province has diminished. You can't argue that you have not diminished the role of the Ministry of Agriculture and the effectiveness of being able to deliver those services.

You've closed throughout the province of Ontario the Ag and Food offices in communities like Matheson in my riding; and you should know that the Ministry of Agriculture office in Matheson was a very important part — as it was in other communities — of the community and the services provided to the farmers of that area. In fact, without any kind of consultation with the community, without not any kind of attempt to be able to deal with how you're going to provide these services when you close down the office, one night the announcement's made — boom — the office is closed within two weeks.

Pierrette Blok, who used to run that office, who was the mayor of the township of Black River, Matheson, had to transfer away to southern Ontario, give up her position as mayor of that community, because she needed to be able to keep her job, and had to leave. We lost a great community leader — not the same political stripe as me. Pierrette was a Liberal, probably still is. I'm trying to convert her. I've always been working at that. But Pierrette, a community leader in her own right within the community of Matheson, was uncontested in the last municipal election, a great asset to our people in Matheson, had to leave because of the closure of the office of the Ministry of Agriculture.

When that was announced, I was on the phone with the minister. I talked to the minister directly, I talked to his staff, trying to make different arrangements by which the community was prepared to share some of the cost of being able to find solutions to keeping that office open. They didn't like that, because there was a downloading of services, the way they saw it. But the community was prepared to take a look at what it could do to preserve some of the services for the farmers of that community, even if it meant that office would have gone to possibly a part-time office, in which event Pierrette probably would have lost her job anyway, but at least somebody would have been there to be able to service the community. But, no, closed it was.

We even offered — and we find out after why the government said, "No." We offered to co-locate the Ministry of Agriculture with the Ministry of Natural Resources in the building in Matheson. At the time both of the ministers were saying, "No, no, no," and I couldn't figure out why at the time. I was saying, "If you've got these two buildings, and you're trying to save dollars as a way of saving money, put them together and you get to share resources in regard to plant cost, you get to share administration cost. The ag rep doesn't have to be full-time. You can cut it down to half-time. You can save over half of the budget."

I couldn't figure out why they wouldn't go for it, and I thought: Well, maybe, they don't like Pierrette. Maybe they're trying to get Pierrette out of there, because some day she might run in the new riding of Timiskaming — who knows? I don't know what they were thinking of. But the point was, it turns out they were closing down the Ministry of Natural Resources offices in Matheson so that's why they wouldn't allow her to go in there, because they knew full well, in the fall of 1995 when they were dealing with the municipality of Matheson, they were dealing with Pierrette Blok and they were dealing with me, the member for Cochrane South, that the agenda was right from the beginning to abandon the community of Matheson, not only close down the Ministry of Agriculture office, but to close down the entire operation of the Ministry of Natural Resources in that community, leaving Matheson with no ministry presence whatsoever other than the plows that are running down the highways and the sand trucks that are run out of that area.

Now there's even talk of the OPP officers in Matheson being converged into one central location who knows where. That's what this government's commitment is to rural Ontario. Any government presence that we had in those communities is gone, number one. So it means people can't get access to services. But in many cases the jobs within the ministries and the jobs within the OPP are an important part of the local economy, because they're small communities; that's gone. People such as Sergeant Teigen and others within the OPP and all of the people who work in communities like Iroquois Falls and Matheson are a big part of those communities as far as what makes those communities go, and gone they are. Sergeant Lamb, another one: Where will he end up? I just say it's a crying shame.

Now on to some of the other points in regard to what the government is doing at the Ministry of Agriculture. This is really a contradiction to the position the government took during the OPSEU strike. If you remember, when OPSEU was on strike there was a great hoopla by the Minister of Agriculture in regard to meat inspection. The Minister of Agriculture was saying, "Oh, we've got to get those OPSEU people back to work in one way or another because, I'll tell you, those meat inspectors, they've got to be out there inspecting the meat, because if they don't, public safety will be at risk." They were blaming OPSEU for the problem and they were trying to put all the onus and responsibility on to OPSEU when it suited them. "When it suited them" is the key phrase.



I remember and you'll remember and people watching at home remember that the Premier, the minister responsible for Management Board and the Minister of Agriculture all in their own time got up and said meat inspectors are a vital part of the inspection process and we need to have them in place in order to assure public safety. Well, what do we find out? Meat inspectors are being cut back by 80%, along with fruit and vegetable inspectors in this province. Not important any more?

My colleague the member for Rainy River, Howard Hampton, asked the question today and said to the Minister of Agriculture, "Well, what is it?" His answer was, "Well, you know, there's only about 4% of the fruit that could be a problem." So I guess the inference is that it's not a big deal. It's like Russian roulette, eh? You go out and buy an apple or you buy a steak, and there's a 4% chance that the thing is poisoned. Then he has the gall to stand in this House today and to say the member for Rainy River was fearmongering.

If the government thought when the OPSEU strike was on that meat inspectors were necessary for public safety, what has changed between then and now? The only thing you can conclude is that it wasn't a question of safety when they said it was, which I don't believe because I think it is a question of safety, or clearly this government is caught in an ideological bent that it doesn't believe the public sector should perform any services, because they don't believe in the public sector, they don't believe in public services and they want to throw everything into the hands of the private sector because, oh, yes, the private sector does it all best.

I'll tell you, when it comes to running a business, I agree. But when it comes to delivering services to the public in regard to public services as decreed by legislation of this House, I feel much more comfortable having the accountability of the public sector delivering those services.

What are we going to have with the change, the 80% reduction in meat inspectors and fruit and vegetable inspectors in this province? They're going to go out and tell the industry: "Industry, inspect thyself. If you think you have a concern as far as your credibility of selling products to the consumers of Ontario, you go out and inspect it yourself."

There are a couple of problems with that. First of all, I don't want the industry doing it itself. It's a little bit like saying, "I'm going to put the kid in charge of the candy store." You know what's going to happen. The kid is not going to be able to resist temptation and he'll be into the candies. It's a little bit the same thing. If you make the industry responsible entirely for the inspection of meats and fruits and vegetables, what you're going to have is the industry on the one hand with the temptation not to really do very stringent inspection if they can get away with it and only keeping public confidence to the point that it doesn't affect their bottom line. That's what's going to happen with this. That's my first concern.

The second concern, which I find even more interesting coming from a Conservative government, is that they will transfer the cost of meat inspection and vegetable and fruit inspection on to the private sector. This is a government that says: "We're the taxfighters. We're

going to take away the onerous tax system that we have, and we're going to take it away so that the private sector can be out there creating jobs without the burden of taxes on its back."

Every opportunity this government has had, it's created more and more user fees. That's what they've done with meat inspectors and that's what they've done with fruit and vegetable inspectors. When industry ends up picking up the cost of inspecting, which they will have to do, that means the entire cost will be paid by the private sector companies, which then will be transferred on to us, the consumers. We'll still pay our taxes, the government will get the savings of that because it will not perform the services and out of the other pocket we're going to pay the private sector for meat and fruit inspectors. Does that make any sense? I'd say no; that does not have a lot of common sense.

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I wish at least the government were consistent in its arguments, but the reality is that it speaks a good line in the House. They've got this mantra; they're going to fix everything from the 10 lost years. What this government is really all about, and we're seeing it in Bill 46, the omnibus bill of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs: It is intent on destroying public services, it is intent on removing regulations on the private sector and it's going to do that at the cost of consumers. Who's going to benefit in the end? I say the people who benefit are those who stand to gain the most, the people with dollars.

I want to point out to you, Mr Speaker, to other people and to the members of this assembly that the reason government gets into the business of passing legislation and regulation in the first place is to protect the public. The private sector, as far as large corporations, doesn't need that kind of help because money itself is able to buy them that help. If you're a large agri-food corporation and you're out there, you've got the dollars and the power to be able to protect yourself. You can hire the high-priced lawyers, you can move in and take over people's farms because you've got the money to do it, you can even set prices because you're so big, but the individual consumer and the individual farmer and the individual Joe or Jane on the street need the protection of their government. That's why we have legislation and that's why we have regulation.

This government is saying in all it's doing, as in Bill 46: "We as a Conservative government say to heck with the protection of the individual, to heck with them. We are going to put all the power in the hands of the corporations and the big money of this province." They don't need all that power. The people need some of that power. What you're going to have is a return to the good old days.

Not too long ago I was in Cobourg, where I had an opportunity to speak to the chamber of commerce along with the critic from the Liberal Party and a staff member from the Conservatives; I can't remember the person's name. I remember a man there, a Mr Lane, who was I think about 85, 86, 87 years old — I might be off on the age — and we were having a chat. He is a staunch Conservative and made the point of showing me his



Conservative card, and we were having fun. Conservatives and New Democrats tend to have a bit of fun when they get together because they have an ideology and we like to argue it back and forth. On the other hand, we're not too sure what ideology Liberals follow. They're all over the place. Some days they're on two sides of the same issue.

Mr Lane was taking great pride in talking about his Conservative membership over the 50-some-odd years that he'd had it. I said to him, "Aren't you concerned, as a citizen of this province, as a senior, about what all this is going to mean to you as a person and to the public when it comes to health care, agriculture, all the issues and services that touch you?" He said, "What do you mean?" I said: "You remember the Depression. You didn't grow up in the Depression; you were an adult in the Depression" — I wasn't; I was born in the 1950s — "but you as an individual over 80 years old lived in the Depression and you would remember how bad it was."

He went on at great length to tell me, "Bad; you don't know how bad it was," and pointed out all the terrible things that happened in the Depression. I said: "Mr Lane, do you want to return to the 1930s? That is what this government is going to do. When they transfer all the effective power of legislation and all the effective power of government to the private sector, we are returning to a day where the haves will have it and the have-nots won't. That's the way it was in the 1930s. Is that what you want?" He said: "Oh hell, no, I don't want to do that. It was terrible."

**Mr Douglas B. Ford (Etobicoke-Humber):** it's 10 times worse in eastern Europe.

**Mr Bisson:** No. The problem is that you guys are creating this great, big myth that government is bad, that government is evil and nothing that government does is good. You are so full of it.

We have in our province and in this country the best health care system in the world. If a person gets sick, they can go into a hospital and be treated.

We have a universal system of education that is the envy of the world. If you want to educate your child, it is law to do so and it is paid by the public. If your kid wants to go off to university or college, they have access. It's not how much money mom and dad have in the bank. It's become that more and more, with the cuts you're doing to education and transfers, and the increase in tuition fees. We have a system of social services in this province. When the disabled community or somebody becomes disabled, they're taken care of and they're given some dignity.

You have the gall to tell me that government doesn't work. Come on. Give me a break. You guys don't believe in that because you want to return them all back to the Dark Ages.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Order.

**Mr Bisson:** If you're able to put them back to the 1930s, you will, and shame on you.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order.

**Mr Bisson:** Back to the bill, Mr Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Yes, I think you got the message.

**Mr Bisson:** Here are some of the things this government is in the process of eliminating through Bill 46. One

of the things they're doing, and I find this interesting — this is yet another example of this government, which is in the process of trying to give all the power to the private sector, give all the freedom to the private sector to do what they want, to the big businesses of this province. Where we, the people, we figure in this, who only knows.

One of the things they're repealing, and I think it's quite interesting, is the Riding Horse Establishments Act. Just for people to know, the act was established in 1971 to protect horses hired out for recreational riding and to ensure that proper health and care was given to those horses.

There are over 500 riding schools in Ontario. Licensing and annual government inspections are done by the province of Ontario through the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and are very vigorous in regard to making sure that the health and safety of the animals is good and that the treatment of those animals is done in a humane way.

What is this government doing? Gone. And why? I guess they're saying, "We don't care what the horse owners and people are doing in regard to protecting those animals."

I know the minister is talking about trying to set up some guidelines about how all this is going to be done, but this bill, when it was set up, I believe in the 1970s, was set up for a reason. It was set up because there were instances out there where people who owned horses, who were out there operating those businesses, were not treating those horses in a humane way and did not have good conditions to keep those animals in.

We have come to a point in our society where we recognize that animals need to be treated with a certain amount of care and respect, and you just cannot leave bad operators to do what they want. Not all people who deal with horses are bad operators. There are many of them who do a very good job, and quite frankly probably will continue to do a good job without legislation, but you know as well as I do that there will be unscrupulous operators who will take advantage of this move — not immediately, not tomorrow when the bill is done, but once this bill is done and over a period of time, they will start to take advantage more and more of the situation of not having this act control their actions.

What will happen in the end is that animals will be put at risk. I don't see how that has anything to do with common sense; it has to do with nonsense.

Another thing the government is repealing, which is really interesting, is the Non-Resident Agricultural Land Interests Registration Act. This was enacted, I believe, in the 1980s. I think it was actually passed by the Davis government. I might be wrong, but it seems to me that's when that came into place. The act required non-residents to register their interest if they had property over 25 acres. It required non-residents to register their interest in that 25 acres of farm land in a central registry. The reason was fairly simple: We wanted to make sure that we knew who were the owners of lands over 25 acres, because in my community, for example, up around the Matheson area —



**Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent):** Speculation.

**Mr Bisson:** That's one of the issues. The question of speculation is a big one. But the other issue is that there are properties that have been purchased by people from outside Canada. A lot of them in Matheson actually are owned by German interests, where they took those lands out of farm production to make them basically a gaming farm. I guess that was the idea of what they wanted to do with them eventually, so they could go out and do a bit of hunting and have a place to go, because in Germany their system doesn't work like ours, where you get a licence and go out; you have to be able to go out on private land.

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But the point is, there were two things. We wanted to know who was buying up that land so that we were able to know as a question of public policy who it was who was taking it, to make sure that land wasn't all of a sudden gobbled up by foreign interests and then controlled by people outside Ontario, because we wanted to make sure we didn't allow these people to gobble up all the land and then to speculate on the sale of that land at a point that would cost us, the people of Ontario, more money than it's actually worth.

That's why we had that act put in place back in the 1980s. We did that because we wanted to make sure we didn't allow unscrupulous investors offshore of Ontario to come in and gobble up land, to be able to speculate at the resale, so that in the end we the consumers and the future property owners of Ontario, and especially farmers, wouldn't end up getting fleeced by paying two and three times the price of what it cost.

The government will say: "Oh, that's intervention. Marketplace rules dictate. Let the marketplace decide." That's the way the government wants to do things. They really believe in that, the Conservatives. I give them credit. The Conservatives have an ideology and I respect them for that. One of the reasons, I think when you see us in debate, the Conservatives and the New Democrats really get at each other is that each of our ideologies is completely opposite. I respect that the Conservatives have an ideology. At least they've got one. At least the New Democratic Party's got an ideology. The Liberals, on the other hand, well, it's whatever happens, happens in the morning, and what happens in the afternoon, who knows?

**Mr Spina:** At least we agree on something.

**Mr Bisson:** The member makes a point. At least we agree. There are actually times I think the Conservatives and New Democrats can work well together on a number of issues, because on a number of things ideologically at times we agree and we're able to work quite well together on a number of issues. In a number of bills that I've spoken on in this House I've given government the credit that was due for things it's done well. Some of the things they've done, I don't have a problem with. They needed to be done and I work with them on those.

But on this one the marketplace in this case was the one that dictated in the early 1980s and prior to that how market lands and farm lands would be resold in regard to price. The problem was that offshore investors were gobbling up the land in some areas, holding on to it for the right time, and then reselling it on the spec market.

The new farmer who was trying to get into the business of farming or the farmer who was trying to expand his or her farm paid through the nose, and it was those farmers who brought that concern to their MPPs and eventually to the government of this province.

It was a lot of Conservative members back in the 1980s who pushed for that, because I recognize that in the rural ridings of Ontario the Conservatives have a good, traditional Tory support, and it was those rural areas and those rural members who brought that concern here to Queen's Park, and a bill was enacted to deal with it.

But what we have found is that this group of Conservatives are really in my view not Conservatives. They're Conservatives in ideology, but they're certainly further to the right than most of the Conservative friends I know who have an affinity for the Conservative Party. I would say this is the Reform Party of Ontario. That's why they're removing this legislation.

The Conservatives of the day under Bill Davis saw some need — if it was Davis who put this in; I'm pretty sure it was. They saw the need to be able to enact this legislation to stop speculation, and this government says: "No. We're going to put it right back into the hands of the private sector. The private sector does it best. Government's no good. Gone it is. It doesn't fit in our ideological game plan." I say you'll rue the day. As a rural member — it's not going to be all of you, but a number of you in areas of rural Ontario are at one point going to pay the price for this, because it will mean the price of land in some areas will be allowed to go up because of speculation, and that's what you're allowing.

I again say, who benefits? You have to ask yourself every time you pass a piece of legislation in this House, who benefits? Clearly, when we passed the Labour Relations Act of Ontario, who benefitted? Working people. No question. When the government passes this legislation in regard to the Non-resident Agricultural Land Interests Registration Act, who benefits? Big money. Another example: When the government passed Bill 7 that dismantled the Ontario Labour Relations Act, who benefitted? Big money. That's what it is. The government wants to protect big money.

The New Democratic Party of Ontario says: "Make all the money you want, but don't fleece people while you do it. We need some game plans to make it somewhat fair, but we have to remember there are people in this equation, not just dollars, and we need to protect people." We are on the side of working people in this province and professionals who have the same view. It doesn't show it in the polls at this point, but I'll tell you, social democracy will be alive and well fairly soon and we'll return back to some sanity in this province.

Now the other one they're repealing — and this is yet another example of the government trying to get out of the face of business because they don't believe the public sector or public policy should interfere with any business — they're repealing the Fur Farms Act. Most people would say, "What is that?" It's an act that licenses and regulates fur farms. It's fairly easy: Those farms where we have mink and other animals used for the making of hats and coats sold abroad and here in Ontario are run according to the principles set out in the Fur Farms Act.



What's this government doing? Ripped, gone. Why? Because they do not believe that the government should be in the face of business. They don't believe government should be in the face of fur farmers in this province because we should leave them to their own devices. If you leave an individual to his or her own devices, over time they will take and they will take more, and eventually they will not have the concern of public interest. Who pays in the end? It's the public. It comes back to, who benefits? Big money. Who loses? Working people. It's always the same story with this government.

Now the other one: I'm quite upset that you're eliminating the Junior Farmer Establishment Act. That program came into play after the war, late 1940s, early 1950s, I'd bet. I remember reading in the legislative library the debates on this one. I encourage all members to take the opportunity to go down to the legislative library and read some of the debates in the past. You'll be quite interested in how things that come around go around, because we're back here again.

I remember reading those debates a couple of years ago when I was looking at that. I had a constituent in my riding who was having problems, who was a new farmer who had taken part in this program. What this program set up under the Junior Farmer Establishment Act did is assisted a young individual who wanted to get into the farming business, the money to offset their mortgage a bit so they're able to make ends meet and are able to help pay their way in the farming business when they first get in.

The Conservative government of the late 1940s, early 1950s, when this was done recognized that if you go into the farming business it is very expensive, a very capital-intensive business to get into. The purchase of land, of equipment, of everything you need, is very expensive. For most young people trying to get into the farming business, it is very difficult unless you happen to carry on the family farm and arrangements are made with your father or your grandfather, whoever might have owned the farm. It's very difficult to get in because large mortgages are involved.

I remember this young farmer coming in to see me with regard to an application he had made — he thought he was going to get approved, and he had some problems — and how critical it was for him to get approved for the money available under the farms establishment act. I remember him telling me: "Gilles, if I don't get this worked out, I can't go into the farming business. I want to do what my father did, I want to do what my grandfather did. I want to work as a farmer because it is the best way of life that I know."

I thought: "If you can do it, brother, I'm there with you. I'm going to do what I can." As a good member, as I'm sure Conservative members do as well, I went out and worked, through the ministry and Minister of Agriculture Elmer Buchanan, to get that worked out. Eventually we got his problems with regard to his application straightened out and, quite frankly, some of the problems the ministry caused in the bureaucracy. We got it fixed and the guy got approved.

I remember that when he got his farm all straightened out with regard to the financing, he gave me a call and

said: "Gilles, I really appreciate the work you've done for me. I've never been a New Democrat — in fact, I've always voted Conservative — but maybe I'll just vote for you." I don't remember what he did in 1995. I don't remember what sign he had out in front of his farm, if he had any, but I'm sure —

**Interjection:** Liberal.

**Mr Bisson:** No, it wasn't Liberal in my riding, my friend. I can guarantee you that. The Liberals came in in last place.

But he was acknowledging how important this program was, the point being that it's gone in this act. Bill 48 says the Junior Farmer Establishment Act is gone, and gone it is, and gone is the hope of many young people in this province to get into the farming business. I'll tell you, if it was expensive in the 1950s to get into the farming business, it is terribly expensive today. Try to pick up a 100-acre or a 150-acre piece of land to start a farm on. Try to buy the equipment you need. It is almost impossible to do unless you've got someone's backing or you've got a really generous banker. Then with interest rates and mortgage costs, to pay that back is really stifling to the young farmer.

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I would think one of the things we're trying to do in this province is to encourage people to start businesses, and farms are businesses, great businesses, where we can give the person the ability to start a business. That's the thing that astounds me about this Conservative government. They're the party, supposedly, of business; they're the party to encourage investors and entrepreneurs. At every occasion, this government has killed programs to sustain business.

Gone is the Northern Ontario Development Corp, moneys that were there to help farm businesses, to help manufacturing businesses in northern Ontario — you name it. They had the ability to access funds to make the bankers happy so they could get loans from the bank to start up businesses. In my riding of Cochrane South, we started a number of businesses — I don't know the numbers, but at least 40 — through programs like the Northern Ontario Development Corp and the northern heritage fund.

The way those programs worked was that they weren't a handout to business. If you had a business opportunity, let's say a \$500,000 venture, and you were able to raise maybe only \$50,000 and the bank wasn't happy with that amount you were bringing into it and said, "Get that share up a little and we might become partners and the bank might lend you money," those programs lent the balance of the money at a reduced interest rate, or in some cases the same interest rate, depending on the deal, to the entrepreneur that allowed the leveraging of the rest from the bank.

Energreen Enterprises in Ramore would never have operated the years it did if it hadn't been for money from the heritage fund. Companies like Malette Granite in Iroquois Falls would never have got off the ground if it hadn't been for those kinds of programs. Again, we're seeing this government pull the plug on the dreams of many people across northern Ontario.

**Mr Ford:** How many are losers?



**Mr Bisson:** No, they didn't lose.

**Mr Ford:** How many of the 40 or 50?

**The Acting Speaker:** This is not questions and comments.

**Mr Bisson:** It's not questions or comments, Mr Speaker, but I will respond. He asked how many people lost. How many times does the bank lend money to an entrepreneur and they lose? At the same frequency as money was lent through the heritage fund or NODC. But do you see bankers say they're not going to lend money to businesses on the basis of some failures? Of course not. That's part of the business, that's part of the risk; that's why banks charge you interest.

For a Conservative government to pull those programs away such as they are in Bill 46 goes against common sense. It goes against what the Tories are supposed to be all about: building opportunities for private sector entrepreneurs. I will put up my record as a government against yours any day when it comes to job creation and the ability to assist small and medium-sized businesses to get off the ground or expand. We created literally tens of thousands of jobs through programs like the Northern Ontario Development Corp, the northern Ontario heritage fund, through Jobs Ontario Training. We created literally tens of thousands of jobs, and how many private sector jobs has this government created over the last year? Virtually none. I say the reason is because they're cancelling programs such as those found in Bill 46. It is truly, truly terrible.

The other thing they're repealing is the Milk Act. No, I shouldn't say "repealing." Sorry; that would be misleading. They're not repealing. The Ontario government, through this bill, is going to be making amendments to the Milk Act. Most people watch this debate at home and say, "What difference does that make?" You just wait. If you're living in northern Ontario, watch the price of milk between now and about 16 months from now, just watch what's going to happen to the price of milk on this one, and watch what's going to happen to dairy farmers in northern Ontario because of the amendments you're making under this act.

I remember this well, because there was a lobby by the large milk producers in southern Ontario and the large dairy producers in regard to the plants in southern Ontario who lobbied the Bob Rae government to make the amendments being done today in the Milk Act. At first, Bob and others in our government looked at it and said: "Maybe it's not such a bad idea. Maybe we can allow this to happen." We, the northern members of the NDP caucus — our interim leader Bud Wildman, Len Wood, Sharon Murdock, Shelley Martel, Floyd Laughren, Gilles Pouliot, Tony Martin, Howard Hampton — we all said, "No, you can't do that." Why? Because when the Milk Act was set up it allowed northern dairies, northern milk producers to have the market they need to survive.

The price of milk and the viability of the business is all about the ability to have a market. If you allow this act to be amended the way it's going to be amended, it means that milk producers in northern Ontario are going to go into direct competition with milk producers in the south, who will truck up milk at a cheaper rate, at a loss. They will gladly lose money, but not because northerners

are not competitive; if northern dairy producers are going to cut their prices, they're going to allow them to lose money so they can go into the northern market and saturate it to the point that they'll throw dairy farmers out of business.

You nod your head. That's good stuff. I guess northern dairy producers shouldn't exist. I say shame on you.

The whole purpose of an economy is to allow people the opportunity to make a buck, to allow people living in regions the opportunity to have mixed economies, and mixed economies can only happen in a jurisdiction where the government says it's going to make sure those opportunities exist. What the Milk Act did was to allow northern dairy producers first of all to do the work they need to do on their farms to produce the milk, but more importantly it gave them a market to sell the milk in because it said, "If you want to sell milk in northern Ontario, you've got to buy northern products." That's gone.

That is yet another example of the commitment this government has about whom they're serving. Who's going to benefit? You have to ask yourself the question. Any time you vote on a piece of legislation in this House, and we're here representing our core constituencies, ask yourself a really simple question, "Who will benefit?" In this case, is it the people of northern Ontario? Is it the consumers? No. Is it the farmers of northern Ontario, the dairy producers? No. Is it the small dairies in places like Thornloe and Timmins that will survive? No. Who's going to benefit is big money. Again the Conservative Party of Ontario under Mike Harris, the Reform Party that it is, is catering to big business interests, and who's going to lose? It is the people. The working people in northern Ontario and across this province will lose one more time at the hands of this government.

The other thing I want to touch on in the four or five minutes I have left is where farmers are really going to get hit in rural areas and what the government is doing around hydro stabilization rates. This relates directly to Bill 46 in regard to competitiveness of farmers. In the province of Ontario we have a stabilization rate set so that the price of hydro across this province is equal, in the sense that if you're selling hydro to a rural customer in northern Ontario or a rural customer in eastern Ontario or to a downtown person in Metro, the rate of hydro is basically the same — small differences, but not a lot.

One of the first things this government is going to have to do, through its bid to privatize Ontario Hydro — they've said that — is take away the hydro stabilization rate. Do you know what that means? It means that if you live in rural Ontario, if you live in densely populated areas of this province you will pay significantly higher hydro rates than you're paying now. Why? Because the government of Ontario is trying to benefit their corporate friends. They're going to allow the large multinationals to move in, buy up the profitable parts of Ontario Hydro, buy the generation — we're not talking nuclear here; we're talking hydro generation. They're going to allow them to pick up the pieces of the hydro company that are profitable and operate those areas. This has to do directly with Bill 46 and the competitiveness of farmers.

What it will do is, if you live in a rural area of Ontario you're going to pay more money for hydro because the



government has decided that it wants to, in the end, cater to its big business friends. I say the government's got an ideology. They're out there to serve the interests of big business; we in the New Democratic Party are there to serve the interests of the people, who after all are in the majority in this province.

I say yes, you want a majority government. That's the way politics goes. I've been there before; in 1990 we did the same. In the end you have to remember, and I learned this lesson the hard way, why you're here. You're here to serve the people, not just the corporate interests of the province of Ontario. Bill 46 is going to serve the interests of big business, it's going to serve the interests of those people in our society who need the least amount of protection. In the end, who's going to benefit? It will be them. And who will be the losers? It will be us.

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I say that when a government purports to be a government of the people and at every occasion and every opportunity and every turn of the page of the legislative calendar is putting in place measures that hurt people and benefit only one sector of the economy, being big business, I want nothing to do with that particular government. I want a government in Ontario that cares about people, a government that tries to seek that balance of saying, "We need to pass laws for the people of this province that protect people and make sure people in the end get a fair shake." I don't see that in Bill 46.

On that, I am not going to support this bill and I want to make clear that the members of the assembly understand why. That's what I tried to outline in this particular debate. I say to those people who are interested, as I am and as many members of this Legislature are, in the rural issues of Ontario in regard to the farming community, I think we need to remember that you got elected on a platform that you would protect farmers, that you would not cut the budgets of the ministry of agriculture. You gave a solemn promise to those people in rural Ontario, and what did you do? You did the exact opposite. That, my friends, is not a very good thing.

I say to the people of this Legislature on the Conservative side who said one thing in opposition and now say another thing in government that you — well, I can't say "lied," Mr Speaker; it would be unparliamentary. But you certainly changed your position, as we might say, from then till now. I say you will pay the price. You will pay the price for having done that. Since you told us that was a solemn promise, since you said you were not going to cut agricultural spending, I say to the government you should resign. You should call an election and let the people of Ontario decide.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk):** I wish to take issue with the member for Cochrane South and his comments on the Junior Farmer Establishment Act. The junior farmers act hasn't given out any money since 1967. I don't understand why you'd want to maintain such an obsolete, archaic piece of legislation.

I also wish to take issue with the NDP member's comments on cuts to agriculture. In February of this year, a joint statement from the Ontario federation and the Ontario Agricultural Commodities Council released

figures showing that OMAFRA under the NDP reign reduced the share of government support through that ministry from 0.9% to 0.5%: \$586 million down to \$439 million in that year.

In their brief, the OFA and the OACC compared the 25% cut to the agriculture budget with the 104% increase to the Ministry of Housing. They compare it to a 40% increase to community and social services. Our government is listening and we're on the fast track with respect to helping OMAFRA through the "do better for less" initiative, Bill 46, this agriculture, food and rural business bill. I might add that significant reductions are already under way with respect to both welfare and subsidized housing. Agriculture will truly regain its fair share of government support.

I also want to highlight Finance Minister Ernie Eves's announcement during our 1996 budget of a new \$15-million program, Grow Ontario, directed to helping Ontario's farm, food and rural sectors compete at home and abroad. This program is designed to reduce barriers to growth and improve investment in the agrifood sector well into the next century.

I also will mention the \$20-million retail sales tax exemption for the farm community.

**Mr Hoy:** There have been comments made about the cuts to agriculture which I guess could relate very dramatically to this bill, but as I read from the government's own document that they passed out during the election, in regard to government spending they said, in fact, that if all government ministries experienced downsizing similar to OMAFRA, Ontario would not be facing its current debt crisis. They gave high marks to the ministry's efficiencies in grappling with the fiscal problems of the time. However, I don't agree with the way the third party handled OMAFRA, but apparently the government said that was fine; they're in good shape. Had other ministries acted the same, we would not be in this debt crisis. Then of course they went on to pronounce to people that they would not cut agriculture. Those in particular in the agricultural community day after day during the election campaign were told that that would not happen.

Indeed, government members themselves wrote letters to their own government and said, "Let's not cut agriculture." You said you wouldn't do it. A group of Conservatives wrote to their own leadership and said, "You are cutting agriculture, something you said you would not do, and we have grave concerns for that," and well they should have.

Some question was raised about the junior farmers' loan and indeed that program has not been functioning over the years, although there were outstanding loans. I guess one might be able to ask: "What are we going to do for the young farmers in the future? What will this government do for them other than leave them with a list of user fees as they start up their business? New and expanded user fees, is that what the young farmers of Ontario are looking at from the Conservative government?"

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I want to rise and compliment my colleague from Cochrane South on his incisive analysis of the bills that are in front



of the Legislature. I think the government continues to believe that they can hoodwink people into somehow ignoring the promises that they made in the campaign.

I can remember when we were beginning to deal with the debt and deficit issue, when making very modest cuts but cuts none the less, the howls from the then third party could be heard out on the street. So when they were developing their election platform, and my colleague from Cochrane South was there, as were a lot of the members on this side of the House, they decided to say: "Fine. When we're in power, we will not cut any money from agriculture. We wouldn't do that."

It didn't take a rocket scientist or a political scientist for that matter to understand why they were looking at the makeup of the province and the number of seats they could win in rural Ontario. They were targeting certain areas and thought that this would have great appeal, and obviously it did have great appeal.

But what is the reality? What is the point that my colleague from Cochrane South was making? It's that over two years, this government, the one that said they would not touch funding to the Ministry of Agriculture, have cut by \$56.7 million over two years. The total job reduction is 954 out of 1,850. It all is part of this government's line, quite frankly, their BS that they're going to do more with less. You're going to do less with less. You can't cut tens of millions of dollars like that and hundreds of jobs and expect that you're going to provide the same service. Why don't you just admit it? You broke your promise. The member for Cochrane South has called you on it.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the speech which was made and which dealt with many of the issues in this legislation. I was wondering why the member didn't have — perhaps it's the length of time allocated to him — more time to talk about the fact, and perhaps he did, that the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is cutting inspectors of the food.

I appreciate the comments he made about that because I have two sets of people worrying about this. First are the consumers who are saying, "I always thought in Ontario, the leading province in terms of population and finances in Canada, that indeed we had the best possible inspection." I remember Premier Davis used to refer to everything as "second to none in the world." I believe that and I think successive governments tried to maintain that, and I give Premier Davis full credit and his agriculture minister of the day for implementing this inspection system.

I think that has served us extremely well and I'm wondering why now we have a situation where the Ministry of Agriculture and Food is cutting those inspectors because not only are the consumers starting to question this, but my friends in the farming community are saying: "You know, we could always say to others in the world or to our own consumers: 'We have inspection in Ontario. We feel secure in our food supply because we have those inspectors. If we have anybody in the farming community who isn't following the rules and regulations, we know we have inspectors who will protect our whole industry, will protect the reputation.'"

I feel for those farmers, I feel for the consumers of this province, and I hope that the members of the back bench of the government will be placing considerable pressure on the Minister of Agriculture and Food to restore those inspectors, because it's extremely important for confidence in our food supply. If he retreats the way the Minister of Health retreated today with the obstetricians, I'll be there to applaud.

1640

**Mr Bisson:** I just want to say to the member for Norfolk that he talked about our term in government. If he had been listening, I did say in my speech that over a period of three or four years we in the NDP government had done restructuring within the Ministry of Agriculture that reduced the overall budget; I did say that if you had been listening. The point I was making was that your party in opposition chastised our government for doing so.

**Mr Christopherson:** Big time.

**Mr Bisson:** Big time. And you so much as went out on the election trail two years before and said, "If you elect a Mike Harris government, we will not do as the NDP and we will not cut funding at the Ministry of Agriculture." We did some restructuring with the Ministry of Agriculture, but the programs remained intact. The farmers were able to access those programs. What you are doing, my friends, is simply cutting the budget of the Ministry of Agriculture and eliminating all kinds of services that are available from the Ministry of Agriculture, when you promised in the election that you would not do so.

I'm calling you on it because this was one of your key promises in the last election: You would not cut agriculture, you would not cut health care and you would not cut education. You struck out on all three because you have cut in all of them. In the Ministry of Agriculture, to bring it to a point, you have cut up to now \$26.1 million, with another \$56 million this spring, for about \$108 million. And you had the gall in opposition to say to us that we were doing something terrible to farming? There will not be a Ministry of Agriculture when we're finished.

Yes, to the member for St Catharines, I did raise the question of meat inspectors and fruit and vegetable inspectors. I guess it goes to show you the duplicity of this government and the hypocrisy of this government when during the OPSEU strike they said meat inspectors were so important we couldn't do without them, but the minute they had an opportunity to throw them out the door, they did. They don't care about the people of this province. They're there to serve the interests of big business and to heck with people, says this Conservative government.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Further debate?

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** It's certainly a pleasure for me to be able to rise in the House and address Bill 46, the ag, food and rural business bill. Certainly, this is a bill that's long overdue. There are many acts in this ministry that are outdated and many that haven't been used for some time, as the member from Cochrane just found out. He was speaking and



making reference to one that hasn't been used in almost 30 years and he thought it was important we should still be supporting it. It's very obvious what's been going on.

Certainly, this bill is going to reduce the level of red tape and overregulation that we've been experiencing in this province for some time. It's going to reduce an awful lot of barriers to the agricultural business here in this province and certainly agriculture is a very important activity in Ontario. It's all about OMAFRA doing better for less, in spite of the comments our opponent made from across the House a few minutes ago.

Agriculture happens to be one of the most important industries in Ontario. It's been the backbone to this province since literally the beginning of time. The advances in agriculture have been exemplary over the years and can be to many other industries we have in the province. It's managed this and given us the lowest cost, the best-priced food in the world and one of the highest standards of living.

If you start looking around the world, you'll find that there are many Third-World countries where most of the population is involved in agriculture.

At the turn of this century, for every family that was on the farm, they were able to produce only enough food for another family that wasn't on the farm; whereas today, for every farmer, they're able to produce enough food for another 100 people. These are the kind of efficiencies, the kind of high-yield farming that's been going on. My hat is certainly off to the farmers of Ontario when they can increase their efficiencies to that extent.

I don't know of any other industry — possibly some of the opposition would have some suggestions; I doubt it — that has managed the kind of efficiencies that have occurred in agriculture. I'm certainly, for one, very, very impressed. Maybe it's my bias, having grown up on a dairy farm, that I am so supportive of the agricultural community, but there's no question in my mind they've come a long, long way.

It's refreshing to see the approach this ministry has taken in developing a business plan to put forward this bill. They had round table discussions for a significant part of last fall, consulting throughout the province. To me, this is a democratic way, going about finding it out, what it is the agricultural community really needs and wants, and then implementing that vision. They've identified core needs for the agricultural community: research and technical transfer, investment attractions, market development and rural economic development.

Agriculture has been moving something like the quote from Alice in Wonderland — when I need great inspiration I look to books such as that — when the queen said to Alice that if you want to stay in the same place as you are, you have to run just as fast as you can, but if you want to get ahead in this world, you have to run just twice as fast. That's really what agriculture has been doing for some time.

This business plan that's been developed is a real commitment to the ag and food industry and to the rural sector. It has often been said that as agriculture flourishes, Ontario succeeds.

Bill 46 focuses on core business objectives. First, it's to maintain a strong agricultural base, and it's also directed to move into some bold, new directions, things that previous governments have not been prepared to do.

This bill is consistent with the overall government strategy of cost reduction to work towards a balanced budget, job creation and the restoration of hope and opportunity for future generations in this province. The goal in this bill is to find new and more efficient ways to deliver programs and services, moving towards a direct delivery of some of these programs. This can be done by the private sector and by many others in our province.

It's also looking to self-reliance and I can assure you that the farming community in Ontario has been very self-reliant through the years. Contrary to what's been suggested by some of our opposition members, this does not mean elimination of programs and reduction of programs in many cases, as they have suggested.

The government, and OMAFRA in particular, is there to set standards, to set policies and to ensure that those policies and programs are enforced. It's there to steer and to give direction; it's not there to be rowing and giving the day-to-day service and assistance that many of the opposition are suggesting.

I keep using this term OMAFRA, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. I find it really quite an embarrassing acronym when you really get right down to it. It's extremely long and cumbersome and it's been the brunt of many jokes in rural Ontario about having rural affairs. This is an example of some of the red tape and awkwardness that the previous government brought into Ontario. There's a total lack of originality in the name of this ministry, adding "rural affairs" to it. I would think that the previous minister, Elmer Buchanan, could have been just a little more original and could have done a lot better in naming the ministry than he did.

We've been hearing from the opposition an awful lot during this debate, and many others, about cutbacks, about reducing the funding. They don't seem to realize the position they've put us in. They talk about reducing staff, reducing programs, reducing service and isn't that terrible. In some cases, it is unfortunate that this is the kind of pressure they have created because of the excess spending that's been going on in the past 10 years.

Today we're taking in approximately the same amount of money that's being spent, outside of interest payments. The interest we are paying, roughly \$8 billion, is about equal to the deficit we're working on this year of \$8.2 billion. That is the position we found ourselves in, with a debt of \$100 billion, more than half of this created in the last 10 years; approximately two thirds of it created in the last 10 years. More has been created in the last 10 years, even in the last five years, than there has been since the beginning of time here in the province of Ontario.

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Just to help you out a little, if we had continued at the same rate you had been running at for the last five years, at the turn of the century the interest payment would be up to \$20 billion. Yes, I'm sure the opposition couldn't care less: "Just keep borrowing, keep borrowing until we're totally bankrupt," and they'd be really happy.



The Liberals were unable to balance a budget in the good times. The NDP thought they could spend their way out in a recessionary time, but it really didn't work.

Let me give you some examples of what was going on. In Guelph, the Liberals designed a new foods lab. The NDP ended up building it. They were so embarrassed with the size of the grandiose building that they didn't even want to go and have a reasonable opening. It's known in Guelph, as it covers two acres, as the crystal palace — millions of dollars spent on a building that covers two acres. They've never got more than 60 employees there to work in this building. The reception area, all glass-domed and covered, would house at least 1,000 people for a reception.

A foods lab was needed, no question, and it's a credit to Ontario to have a lab like that, but they got so carried away, like kids in a candy store spending the money, that they built this kind of building. It's totally unacceptable to the needs of the province of Ontario to have a reception area that would handle 1,000 people. Had you built a reasonably sized laboratory, maybe we wouldn't have the kind of debt we have today.

Let me give you another example. The Liberal agricultural minister insisted on building a diagnostic veterinary laboratory in New Liskeard — I guess because it happened to be his riding — against all the recommendations coming from the branch director, the assistant deputy minister, insisted on going ahead and building a \$200-million lab. Do you know what happened 18 months after its official opening? The NDP closed it, and they were so stuck on successor rights of employees, they never gave an opportunity for local veterinarians to operate that particular laboratory. That is why we have a \$100-billion debt in this province today.

I could go on and talk about the geology lab in Sudbury that there's hardly anybody working in, the rope-testing lab that was built in Sudbury, the silviculture lab in Sault Ste Marie, the forensic medicine lab in Sault Ste Marie, the extensive addition they put on the environment lab. A little bit of common sense in building those kinds of structures would have been very much in order. Yes, the need was there, but not to the extent that you people designed and built.

If I may, I'd like to make reference to a couple of the acts and then wind up.

The Livestock Branding Act provides a registry of brands used by cattle owners and a relatively small number of horse owners to permanently identify their animals. By changing the Livestock Branding Act, one of the major goals is to move out of the direct delivery of services that can be provided by others, while fostering industry self-reliance. By replacing the Livestock Branding Act with the Livestock Identification Act, industry will now manage a service it needs. The Livestock Identification Act will be administered by the Ontario Cattlemen's Association instead of OMAFRA, and to me this is a very natural kind of move. Other types of identification may be included as new methods are developed and implemented, and today there are many uses of chips implanted subcutaneously to identify animals.

The Fur Farms Act, which was referred to a little earlier, licenses and regulates fur farms. It will be

repealed to eliminate the unnecessary regulations of this particular industry. No other farm practice is licensed similar to the fur farms, and getting rid of this particular act will get rid of excess regulations and will prevent the overlap with the Ministry of Natural Resources. Certainly these animals are at no greater risk, nor is their welfare, than any other animals in livestock production. If there is any reason to suspect these animals are being misused, investigations can be carried out by the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and of course charges could be laid under the Criminal Code.

Codes of practice have been coordinated by the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies and are used by the industry, scientists and animal welfare groups to promote sound husbandry and welfare practices, and the repealing of the Fur Farms Act will not affect these codes of practice.

The Riding Horse Establishments Act was very useful in the days when it was brought in and has served its useful purpose. It's being repealed because the level of animal care has dramatically improved in recent years as the general public has become more knowledgeable about the welfare of animals. Certainly there has been a tremendous turnaround in attitudes towards the wellbeing of animals. This is another act where the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals will now be able to inspect. In the past, this has been exempt and they were not able to inspect. Horses will have the same kind of protection in these facilities as other livestock has, and pets, zoo animals etc. It is another example of reducing duplication.

In closing, this bill does not jeopardize programs or service delivery. The goal is to find new and more efficient ways to deliver programs and services. We are reducing red tape, moving out of direct delivery of services that can be done better by others and fostering industry self-reliance. This bill is about reducing red tape and improving efficiencies, which will create an improved business climate for industry. In making these changes, we are streamlining the ministry and reducing costs by over \$22 billion. Industry will become more self-reliant and will find ways to deliver the services it needs at a reasonable cost.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall):** I had a hard time listening to some of the statements the prior speaker made, especially about the \$100-billion debt. If he goes back through history, he'll find out who created most of that, and it wasn't the Liberals. I'd like to play back to him some of the brainwaves the former Tories had, in oil and gas purchases, in resorts, in land purchases.

The Tories, when they were in opposition, were always whining that agriculture didn't get its share of the budget, and the Tory members were always wanting more. I could play that back to you from Hansard. But I'm telling you, they sure have the record for cutting the agriculture budget.

The members also say that services won't be cut. The previous speaker and the Tory members are going to have quite a time convincing rural Ontario that services aren't going to be cut, with some of the things that have already happened, and more will happen as things unfold.



I would hope that members across the way would take a little time to go back through history and see who created the debt and who did the cutting. I think it would be a good lesson for everyone, because you're not fooling anyone in rural Ontario. I'm sure as we get into the next year, they'll find out more. I think you've got a lot of answering to do.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** Let me make a couple of comments in response to the remarks made by the government member. He said that most of the bill that's before us came as a result of consultation that took place, where the minister and his PA went out and talked to people about the changes they wanted to see. I find it hard to believe — in fact, I find it unbelievable that the people they talked to said: "I want a whole whack of new user fees in the agricultural sector. I want a whole lot less service in the agricultural sector. I now want to pay for services that, before, I used to receive from the public of Ontario through this ministry."

I find it unbelievable that the member could stand in his place and somehow tell us that as a result of consultation that took place in the farm community, the new user fees implemented through this bill are something the people in rural Ontario want, something farmers want. That is just not believable and it's just not true.

1700

The fact of the matter is that your folks in the third party, when they were on this side, went all around rural Ontario and told folks, in order to buy votes, that there would be no cuts to agriculture. They made it absolutely clear. It was an ironclad promise. People ran on that during the campaign, most of the rural members who won on your side ran on that in the campaign and you have broken your promise. Why don't you stand up in this place and at least admit that is what you've done? That's exactly what has happened. Over the next two years over \$50 million is going to come out of the budget of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Finally, it was also your now Premier who ran around the province, again in an effort to buy votes, and told people there would be no new user fees, period, another ironclad promise, and this bill is chock-full of new user fees for people in rural and agricultural Ontario. That's the beginning and the end of it. Why don't you get up and admit it?

**Mr Harry Danford (Hastings-Peterborough):** I'd just like to commend my colleague the member for Northumberland for his comments on this bill and the very good reasons why it is being introduced at this point in time. I'd also like to make a couple of comments on some considerations that were put forth from across the House.

The member for Cochrane South made some interesting observations with regard to support of processing and horticultural groups, and I think the safety still remains there. It was well displayed when the minister spoke about it earlier this afternoon and identified what is happening within inspection agencies. Certainly there is no consideration to take away from that high standard that has been maintained and preserved and will continue to be preserved within the industry. Neither the producers nor the processors would even consider — I emphasize

the word "consider," as the member mentioned — reducing the standards or jeopardizing the domestic food industry that they've brought to this point in Ontario. It is ridiculous even to consider such a thing and make that statement that would bring the producers and processors to that level.

The other thing is to maintain a viable agriculture. For once we've seen a government come forth that has worked with all segments of the agricultural aspect of industries and provides the opportunity for industry to be directly involved in decisions that will work with their industry and preserve it for years to come. I think that is the difference with this government, and for that reason we move forward in this way, to take away redundant aspects and put forth the real, true projects and the support the industry requires.

**Mr Hoy:** Today we've entered into discussions about inspections of farm produce, more particularly fruit and vegetables, earlier in the afternoon. The question is one of credibility, that the inspection is done properly, that producers are protected and know that inspections are being done so they can maintain the high quality of inspection and belief that their produce is of the best, and of course Ontario's product is in that category. As well, we're talking about consumer confidence that the inspection program is being carried out at all times with the most regard for quality, and Ontario enjoys that today.

I'm reading from the Grower, a horticultural industry pamphlet, which says: "The horticultural inspection program will see 32.5 full-time-equivalent positions slashed to 7.5 full-time-equivalent positions and a major reduction in provided services. The government estimates that the restructuring will garner \$1.3 million in savings." I believe that the whole program is \$1.6 million, so they're slashing very hard at this program, one that producers have enjoyed to give them a credibility of product which always existed. It's a verification that this is the case and it gives consumers confidence that what they are buying is what is labelled and what is boxed and what is put in bags.

We know full well that Ontario has enjoyed this. Our national reputation for good product is world-renowned. It allows us to make inroads into other markets around the world, and this is what the world is about: new markets, new opportunities and new places to do business.

**Mr Galt:** I'm glad to be able to respond to some of the comments. The member for Cornwall made reference that they weren't the only ones who created the debt; and, yes, in the beginning of time until 1985 there was approximately \$30 billion of debt that was run up. That moved up towards around \$50 billion by 1990, and the debt —

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** It was \$40 billion; get it straight.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please. Order.

**Mr Galt:** — and the annual budget doubled during those five years, so I think maybe they could have controlled the budget just a little bit better.

The opposition member from Sudbury East, making reference and kind of laughing at the approach the



ministry used in the round table discussions — certainly a democratic process in developing a business plan and putting priorities forward, and the farmers were certainly more than pleased to develop priorities. They are very realistic in their approach and they know that the government is in trouble financially. They established priorities, and this government is meeting the priorities those farmers established at that time.

The member for Essex-Kent, commenting on concerns about reduction in numbers of inspectors — it's no wonder we have to cut back on inspectors again because of the budget problem. If there are two people who have a combined budget, possibly a married couple, and one goes out for a few years and spends a whole lot of money and puts the couple in debt, and then the other member comes along and tries to bail the couple out and pay it off, who's the one that's really blamed for the mess? Is it the one who tries to balance the books afterwards and straightens up the mess, or is it the one who's been out spending like crazy, like a kid in a candy shop, spending uncontrollably for several years?

Who's to blame? I would suggest the one who was spending uncontrollably. That's exactly what was going on for 10 years, and maybe it's just about time that both the Liberals and the NDP understood that.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Crozier:** It's my pleasure as well today to stand in this place and make a few comments regarding Bill 46. Certainly, I have heard during the debate today that much of this bill is about money.

The member for Northumberland stands over there, not taking the advice of the member for Essex-Kent and getting out of the building before the manure spreader starts, and says that the debt went up \$10 billion between 1985 and 1991. He should know full well that it only went up \$5 billion above the \$30 billion that the Conservative Party had accumulated before that. He also knows that the first balanced budget in 23 years was a Liberal balanced budget; and most of all, that the Taxfighter, Mike Harris, voted for the biggest personal income tax increase in Ontario's history.

It's no wonder that the people I represent in Essex South, which happens to be the most southerly riding in the province of Ontario — and we have in that riding the township of Pelee, which is the most southerly area in Canada. I'm quite proud to represent that area because, of the eight townships and the five small urban municipalities that I represent, agriculture is probably — in fact, I could say safely is — the most important industry in the area. That's why I want to take a few minutes to speak to you today.

I might say, before we get into the nitty-gritty of the bill, that the member for Northumberland said he was embarrassed by the term "OMAFRA." In fact, I have two suggestions for you, and I sincerely hope you take this back, because I think you can do something about it. We were going to rename OMAFRA the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, and that meant that part of your responsibility should be, in fact, the development of rural Ontario, so the word also meant something.

The member for Northumberland, as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Environment and Energy — and I'll try to get his attention once more — could do something else for rural Ontario. He could get off his duff and after a year of sitting on the question of semi-raised septic systems, do something for rural Ontario: Allow semi-raised septic beds to be used. They're less costly and just as effective, and we were told in this Legislature just a few days ago that they're going to be another two months looking at this. I can't imagine that.

Our concern is that the minister responsible for that might not even be around here in two months. Then are we going to take another year? I say to the member for Northumberland, you could be very helpful to rural Ontario by going back to your office and getting the minister to put pen in hand and sign the approval for the use of semi-raised septic systems in rural Ontario.

1710

There are other things that we can do, I'm sure, but we're here today to debate Bill 46, An Act to amend or revoke various statutes administered by or affecting the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and to enact other statutes administered by the Ministry. That's a mouthful. It's almost as much of a mouthful as the omnibus Bill 26 that we dealt with earlier this year in that this is an omnibus agricultural bill. It repeals eight acts, amends six more, creates AgriCorp, the Agriculture and Food Institute of Ontario, and crop insurance, so it covers all of those areas, quite a large agenda.

It was mentioned earlier in the debate that in order to get to this point, they went around the province in round table discussions. I repeat the comments of one of our colleagues earlier. I'm sure as well that at these round table discussions, the farm business people in the province of Ontario didn't say, "Yes, in spite of the fact that you're saying you will not cut one red cent from agriculture, yes, you can cut \$82 million and you can put a whole range of new user fees on us."

That's incredible, it's unbelievable, and I doubt they said that. I suspect that when the Conservatives went around pre-election and told the farm community that you weren't going to touch agriculture, they did say, "We appreciate that because we are among the most efficient in agriculture in Canada and in the world, and we've done what we can to improve our lot and we appreciate the fact that the government understands."

We know in this place that agriculture receives a very small part of the Ontario budget. We've been told that earlier, that it's now less than one half of 1% of all government spending. However, agriculture and the food industry contribute greatly to the economy. About 5.8% of Ontario's gross domestic product comes from agriculture industries, and I know that full well. As I said, in Essex county we have one of the largest food processors in the province of Ontario, in the Dominion of Canada, that being the H.J. Heinz Co, because of course I come from the tomato capital of Canada. My home town happens to claim that, and we have this huge tomato in the main street to remind everybody of that.

**Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside):** And the Tomato Festival.

**Mr Crozier:** Thank you. I'm reminded that we have the Tomato Festival as well. It's not the only tomato



festival in Canada; there's another one held a little east of us, but we were first. And we have the corn fest in Tecumseh, so Essex county is full of fun and food, and agriculture provides all that.

But my point is, as I said, I come from Leamington. It claims to be the tomato capital of Canada and I think the world, but it's the surrounding area that contributes to that. Not very many tomatoes are grown in Leamington; a lot of them have nice steak tomatoes in the garden, but most of the tomatoes are grown in Essex and Kent county that are processed down in southwestern Ontario, resulting in 5.8%, or its contribution thereto, of the gross domestic product in the province of Ontario. It's second only to the automotive industry, and there too I'm proud: Essex South is on the border of the city of Windsor, one of the great automotive-producing cities in the world. As a matter of fact, I even drive one of the vehicles that comes from that city, so I'm proud to say I do that as well.

I want to give you some idea of just what agriculture means to Essex county, to Kent county and to the province of Ontario. These figures come from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs — we prefer it be called rural development — in Essex. They are 1993 figures, so we can take these and I'm sure even improve upon them.

Estimated crop and livestock production in the county of Essex, \$237.7 million; estimated livestock, milk, poultry and other, \$16.8 million; field crop production, and this would include wheat, oats, barley, mixed grain, grain corn, silage corn, soybeans, tobacco, hay, seed crops like corn, soybeans, wheat, other and sunflowers, \$92.7 million.

Processing vegetable crops — I just talked about the great H.J. Heinz Co that has contributed so much to our local community, a great corporate citizen. Tomatoes, cucumbers —

**Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton North):** Are you getting a pension or something?

**Mr Crozier:** You know how great they are, don't you? You know why the H.J. Heinz Co is among the greatest.

**Mr Chudleigh:** Well, you are getting your pension.

**Mr Crozier:** I worked there for 11 years and I did accumulate some pension, yes, and they haven't taken it away from me either.

Tomatoes, cucumbers, sweet corn, green and waxed beans, peppers, green peas, cabbage, cauliflower, pumpkin and squash, \$18.7 billion. Fruit crops — we have everything in Essex and Kent counties. You can go to Colasanti's; they grow oranges and lemons. I'm often asked early in the spring when the palm trees are coming out in Essex county.

Fruit crops in Essex county, \$7.8 million. The greenhouse and nursery industry — just to show you how important it is to our area, I suspect, and I hoped I would be able to get these figures that we are now the county that has the most area under glass, in other words in greenhouses, anywhere in the province of Ontario. Just in case I'm wrong, we've had an ongoing battle with the Niagara Peninsula because they're a great greenhouse growing area as well. The greenhouse and nursery business in Essex county alone, \$85 million.

Fresh vegetables — every time I come down here now I have to bring my trunk half full of tomatoes and vegetables. Robert Fisher from Global TV loves the tomatoes that come from Essex county. In fact, he and Paul Vasey of CBC Windsor have dubbed me, and I appreciate it very much, the tomato king. Can you believe that? Isn't that great?

**Mr Christopherson:** Some things are worth dying for.

**Mr Crozier:** "Some things are worth dying for," the member says, and it's almost that way.

Fresh vegetable crops, \$16.6 billion.

So there we are. I've only outlined part of what is so important to Essex and Kent counties and the surrounding area: agriculture.

**Mr Chudleigh:** It's \$160 million, not billion. You said \$18 billion.

**Mr Crozier:** If I said \$18 billion, perhaps I was stretching the truth just a bit. I'll correct that. That's fine. I wouldn't want any billion-dollar figures to sneak in where they wouldn't, because this government, when it comes to talking about money, exaggerates to no end, and I certainly wouldn't want to be like them.

1720

Over a year they've absolutely slashed social services in this province, they're slashing money out of agriculture that they said they would never do and they still talk about \$1 million an hour. I suspect that their tax cut has simply added back that money — the fact that the debt is going to get to \$120 billion, this government's plan, that they're going to borrow more money than the debt of the Liberal Party in its five years — can you believe that? — just to give a tax cut to the rich. If that figure is still \$1 million an hour, it must be because of their tax cut. I can't think of any other reason.

As I pointed out, agriculture is very important to us. I've talked about money, but the agri-food industry provides about 640,000 jobs in the agribusiness in the province of Ontario. That's just slightly less than the 725,000 jobs the government says it's going to create with its tax cut for the rich. Of course they've slowed down the tax cut to the rich, but they can't simply not do it, because that's the only job plan they have. Can you imagine that they say they're going to create with this tax cut to the rich more jobs in all of agriculture in the province of Ontario? I hope they can, but the problem is that they're way behind. They're going to have to create a lot more jobs over the next three or four years than they've created up to now or their job plan is down the tube.

Farm cash receipts — I'm going to get this figure right — in Ontario totalled \$6.2 billion in 1994. The minister is introducing this legislation on AgriCorp for the purpose, it says, of administering the Crop Insurance Act. We know that it's going to do a lot more than that. That may be the simple explanation they want most to understand, but to use an old agricultural term, we didn't just fall off a turnip wagon. We know what's going on.

AgriCorp will be allowed to perform a number of other duties that it's going to have. Something that AgriCorp will be allowed to perform, other than the duties conferred on it: They'll be responsible for any agreement made between the government of Ontario or any of its



agencies and with the government of Canada and its agencies, and AgriCorp will be able to make agreements and deal with any person, it says. I'll have a little bit to say later about this "any person" issue.

Slashing the government's budget and reducing staff to OMAFRA cause one to wonder; you have to really think about whether AgriCorp will be involved in any more programs. I think the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is sincere; I think he's a good person. I've only been here a couple of years and I know he has agriculture's interests at heart and he has the support of a lot of backbenchers, because most of them come from rural Ontario, but I really don't think he has the support of the cabinet around the table.

We're concerned that in this downsizing, in this reduction of ministries, somewhere down the road the Ministry of Agriculture may simply disappear and crown agencies will handle all its business. All these user fees will then surface and maybe even a few things left with agriculture, because it is a big business — maybe the ministry of industry, trade and commerce will handle them. Wouldn't that be awful? Can you imagine, albeit the great business person the minister of industry, trade and commerce and tourism is? We wouldn't want anybody from Bay Street handling that business, would we? I hope this isn't just a move towards abolishing the Ministry of Agriculture.

**Fees and service charges:** My friend the member for Cochrane South mentioned very briefly fees and service charges. He had a great deal of important information, important things to say about this bill, and I know he didn't feel he had enough time to spend. But fees and service charges are of prime concern to those of us concerned about agriculture. For example, the government has attached a \$25 user fee to farmers applying for the summer experience wage assistance program. Can you imagine this? They're charging farmers a fee to help youth and others get employment.

On the other hand, the Minister of Community and Social Services just today said: "Do you know what we're going to do when it comes to welfare recipients? We're going to pay headhunters to get them jobs." But do you know what they do to agriculture? "We're going to charge you to help us employ people." Can you believe that? I can't. Coming from an agricultural community, I can't believe they're going to charge farmers to employ people but they're going to pay city folk to find jobs for other people. It doesn't make sense.

We're talking about food. Well, I think this government has an appetite, a great appetite for user fees. In addition to this \$25 user fee, they're going to promote, either directly or indirectly, other user fees. We know already that there are going to be user fees charged by municipalities on parks, libraries, transit, fire department calls. All of this is going to affect our agricultural community, without doubt. We all know that user fees imposed on Ontario farmers could be very detrimental to their economic future.

Ontario farmers will be faced with these user fees at a time when it's devastating, notwithstanding the fact that it was mentioned earlier by the member for Northumberland that productivity has increased over years. For

goodness' sake, the only way farmers would have been able to survive is if they had been innovative and increased productivity, with the prices they get today. So of course they've helped themselves, have become more efficient, have become more productive. But imposing user fees at a time like this is certainly no way to thank the farming community for what it's done.

We look at the Agriculture and Food Institute, and we see the words "fees and service charges." Look at the provisions for the appeal board and its powers, and what do we see? We see fees and service charges. If you look at the amendment to the Farm Products Grades and Sales Act, what do we see? They may be able to establish fees and service charges.

At the same time, this government says, "We're going to do more for less." I heard the term "BS" used earlier today, so I guess that's okay, although I'm not inclined to use it very often, but when I really mean it, I can use it. That's just so much farm bull. They're not going to do more for less. They're going to do less and they're going to charge you for it, is what's going to happen.

The food inspectors: That's been a great bit of debate today in the Legislature. There was a lot of talk about food inspection. The Minister of Agriculture told us, "Well, these inspectors aren't here to protect the consumers of Ontario." Well, I beg to differ. I think any inspector in the agrifood industry is there for our protection. They're there to protect quality and they're there also, if it happens that they should discover anything untoward, to be able to take care of a matter like that.

1730

But no, I just read here from some information I have that nearly all the inspectors who help monitor Ontario produce for pesticide residues are being eliminated to save money. But the province's agriculture minister says consumers who are concerned about contaminants in food should send the food to the government for testing. Can you believe that? The Minister of Agriculture of the province of Ontario says if you're concerned about your food — and for the vast majority, they needn't be — "any individual who feels there may be a problem, the individuals or the consumers, they're certainly welcome to send their samples," said Noble Villeneuve."

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** Just mail it in.

**Mr Crozier:** Just send your samples in.

**Mr Michael Brown:** Do you need stamps?

**Mr Crozier:** No, you need ice boxes, because your food's going to spoil if you send it in, and certainly it'll be bad then. An official at the government laboratory in Guelph who does the testing says it costs between \$250 and \$1,000 a sample, and fresh produce sent through the mail would not arrive in any shape to be tested. Can you believe it, that a Minister of Agriculture of the province of Ontario would say, "Well, consumer, just send in anything you're concerned about," but send in a cheque for between \$250 and — well, why don't you send in a cheque for \$1,000 and we'll send you whatever change is left over. That's ridiculous.

The onus shouldn't be on the consumer to guard against toxic chemicals or any other underquality. It



should be the government that's there to protect us. They're simply abdicating their responsibility in the name of downsizing, economy and tax breaks. Boy, I get excited when I read that kind of thing.

When the minister started talking about cuts, his tune changed a little from "We aren't going to touch agricultural spending," to "No agricultural program would be cut." First came the fruit land preservation program. It was axed. Now farm groups say the grain financial protection program will be cut. This really erodes the level of trust farmers might extend to the user fees and other service charges, because what the minister's saying is, "We're going to fight to retain certain areas and we're going to have to charge you user fees to do that," but at the same time, they are making cuts to programs. I don't know what's to be believed, and that's the concern. When I go to Blondes, when I go to Scholars early in the morning, when I go out to the Arner Stop, when I go to Shep's in Harrow, these are the kinds of concerns that farmers bring to me.

Certainly, they want to be part of the solution, as the minister said, not part of the problem, but you know, all they want is for you to be honest with them. They thought the government was honest with them when they said it wouldn't make any cuts at all. There have been cuts. There are farm organizations that have tried very hard and I think do say, "Maybe you've found that we do have to share in further efficiencies in government." But for goodness' sake, be on the level with them. It's time to level with the farmers in the province. Don't play around with their trust.

In Bill 46, we have AgriCorp making regulations, AgriCorp providing for the collection of levies or charges. There seems to be no end to these. I mentioned earlier about "any class of person." Our omnibus Bill 26 had that term in it, "any class of person." As I recall, and it seems so long ago, it had to do with municipal charges. That same wording is used in here. Therefore we really seriously question this government in the area of user fees. Why do you have to have them in there and what intention does the government really have?

My time is nearly up. I've appreciated the opportunity to share my views with you and frankly to share the view of many of the fine farming community constituents I have. All they want to do is to be able to make a living. They do it well. We're the best in the world. All they're asking for in some cases is a little help. But be honest with them. Tell them what you're going to do, why you're going to do it, and I think they'll try and work along with us all.

Thank you. I appreciate the time to share my thoughts with you.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Bisson:** I want to make comments on the speech by the honourable member from the Liberal Party. I just want to say that he points out, I think quite well, the effect this legislation is going to have with the transformation of services from the Ministry of Agriculture over to AgriCorp. We know, as the member pointed out, that what is going to happen is that the services that used to be provided by the Ministry of Agriculture will be trans-

ferred over to AgriCorp when it comes to the insurance stabilization program and other programs. The result of that is going to be that services that used to be provided by the ministry at no cost in regard to user fees to the farm community are going to result in user fees for the farm community.

I guess it goes contrary to two things, the first part being that the government had promised during the election and prior to the election that they would not cut funding at the Ministry of Agriculture and the new services. Yet again they've cut services and there go more services. Budgets have gone and also service has gone. But probably more important, what we're seeing is yet more costs being passed on to the farmers of the community across Ontario. I don't see that as particularly being very good for farmers and I wonder, as does the member for Essex-Kent, I believe is the riding —

**Mr Crozier:** Essex South.

**Mr Bisson:** Essex South. Excuse me. The people who are going to benefit out of this are not going to be the farmers in his community or the farmers in my community. It's going to be those people with big money. Quite frankly, what the government is supposed to be doing is making laws and making programs that benefit the people of this province and not just a chosen few who happen to be contributors to the Conservative Party. With that, I will just say that the member was perfectly right in the comments he made in regard to user fees.

**Mr Michael Brown:** It's always interesting to listen to the member for Essex South, who brings to us a perspective that's based on one of the better agricultural areas in our communities. But his area is somewhat different than mine in Algoma-Manitoulin, where we are primarily livestock producers. This is a particularly difficult time for people in the beef industry, as members would know. Commodity prices are very low and the government, in this bill, is providing for things that I'm not sure everybody in this place is quite aware of. When you bring in an omnibus bill, there are always these sections that somehow the government backbench isn't completely aware of.

One of the sections that's causing great concern in my area is a section that allows the government to sell what are called ARDA lands. ARDA lands were purchased over a period of time by a Robarts government, I believe, perhaps a Davis government, but certainly by one of the two. They are the community pastures. At a time when livestock producers are being pushed to the wall by general commodity prices, this government wants to go out and sell the community pastures that many of our livestock producers rely on. I find that almost too incredible to believe.

1740

I'm appealing to the government back bench, because I really believe that they probably don't know that provision's in there. I'm saying to them, on behalf of the people in communities like Manitoulin Island and along the North Shore of Lake Huron where community pastures are important, that the government says, "Whoa, we're not going to do this, especially when commodity prices are at near record lows."



**Mr Danford:** I'd just like to respond to a couple of comments that were made by the speaker, and I appreciate his comments many times. I think we share the same background and I think we share the same feelings, but I think there are a couple of comments that were made that were somewhat inaccurate.

I think the benefit of the AgriCorp program, and it's been discussed with the industry, is clearly defined with who will be operating it, and I think the simple fact of the administration costs at the present time will be able to be implemented with the program and the benefits of that go directly back to the farming community. I think that will be the savings and I think that has to be clearly identified. I'd just like to point that out.

I think the other comment that was made about the grain financial protection program is not part of this, and I think that was perhaps a little different issue. I think we're talking about a different issue as contained in this bill. I think there was reference made to that. I don't believe that's correct. So I would just point that out to the member opposite.

Thank you for those comments.

**Mr Bradley:** I thought the speech was excellent. He's obviously a member, the member for Essex North, who is aware of agricultural issues —

**Mr Bisson:** South.

**Mr Bradley:** South and North both are very good at that. The member for Essex South is particularly, although I would not want to downgrade the member for Essex North, who is now Essex-Kent, as being very good at this.

I'm glad he brought out the fact that there have been cuts in the agricultural ministry, because I've been trying to help my friend the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, who I'm sure would like to have all of the necessary resources to carry out his responsibilities of protecting the farming industry in the province of Ontario and the food in the province.

Yet I know the others in the cabinet, probably the president of the Treasury Board, of the Management Board, or the Premier and the Treasurer and so on, these are people who are imposing their will on the minister of agriculture, who must be fighting — I assume he's fighting hard — for the necessary resources in cabinet; and yet now we find that the government is going to be implementing, according to the member for Essex South,

user fees which are going to affect farmers adversely in this province.

The farmers I talk to are facing real challenges, and what they say is they don't need any additional costs being placed on them. I thought that that's what was happening. So now I know why 13 Tory MPPs signed a letter requesting that Mr Harris uphold his promise to protect agricultural funding. I know that.

**Mr Michael Brown:** He ignored them.

**Mr Bradley:** I wish he had paid attention to those MPPs. I wish they'd go public, call a press conference. I'll be there to support them on this occasion, as I would always be, because I know their hearts would be in it. I know behind closed doors, the caucus room, they are probably putting forth this case, but the only way that you can teach the cabinet a lesson, let me assure you, is to go public with these concerns and then you'll find you get results.

**Mr Crozier:** I appreciate the comments of my colleagues on all sides of the House, and if anything was misinterpreted I'm glad it was clarified. It's only in my enthusiasm and my sincerity about my riding that I may have gotten carried away.

I had a post-budget meeting a couple of weeks ago — and we'd had a visitor to our riding, even though the chamber of commerce told the Tory representative that they had their own MPP and he could explain the budget — and one of the questions asked by one of the individuals there, and he was a greenhouse grower, was if I knew how much taxes were collected in Essex South and how much government money over the years had been spent in Essex South. I told him, quite honestly, I didn't know that answer, because we come from a very affluent area of the province and we appreciate it. It isn't a case of whether we get back every nickel that we put into the government. The point is, the reason for taxes is to spread the wealth. Unlike a tax cut for the rich, it's to spread the wealth in the province.

All we're asking in Essex South, and all this greenhouse grower was asking, is that the Minister of Transportation look at the Highway 3 bypass. It's in great need of being improved so that the produce can move from the greenhouses, from the fields. A lot of it is exported to the United States. All we need is the Highway 3 bypass looked at and improved so that we can move that great farm produce out of the southern part of the county, much of it to the United States. That's all we ask.

*Report continues in volume B.*



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## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Tuesday 18 June 1996

Mardi 18 juin 1996



Speaker  
Honourable Allan K. McLean

Président  
L'honorable Allan K. McLean

Clerk  
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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 18 June 1996

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 18 juin 1996

*Report continued from volume A.*

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## MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1996

## LOI DE 1996 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LE MINISTÈRE DE L'AGRICULTURE, DE L'ALIMENTATION ET DES AFFAIRES RURALES

Continuation of debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 46, An Act to amend or revoke various statutes administered by or affecting the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and to enact other statutes administered by the ministry / *Projet de loi 46, Loi modifiant ou abrogeant diverses lois appliquées par le ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ou qui touchent ce ministère, et visant à édicter d'autres lois appliquées par le ministère.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Further debate?

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** I'm surprised that the other parties don't want to comment on this, but I'm glad to have our turn. I know we have a few more speakers on this.

This AgriCorp bill is, from the minister's point of view, very important legislation, and one that gives us great cause for alarm in fact. While the minister will say from time to time that the two previous governments proposed similar types of organizations, this minister has certainly developed this bill now into, as my colleagues have said, a large omnibus bill that basically amends many acts that have served Ontario farmers well over the years. It's certainly gone beyond the original intention of what the Liberal government wanted to see with an AgriCorp.

One thing we also wanted to do with AgriCorp is not only to develop a crown agency that the federal government would be more willing to put its stabilization and crop insurance money into, but also to move that organization into southwestern Ontario and move it out of Toronto. That was our plan too, and if I remember, we wanted to put that into Chatham so that we would continue the relocation of jobs that we were doing in northern Ontario and also starting to do in southern Ontario, to make sure that rural Ontario received its fair share of the jobs that tend to be around Queen's Park and in this jurisdiction.

I think it's also fair to point out that while this AgriCorp bill goes beyond the original intentions of our

government to develop a crown agency to handle crop insurance and the stabilization programs, it also introduces a raft of user fees, brand-new user fees for Ontario farmers. With that, we fear, as we've talked about food testing, possibly a lack of service, because farmers may not access all these services because of those fees. Contrast that with a broken promise that while we are looking to farmers to pay more in user fees, the Conservative government broke its promise to the farmers of Ontario that it would not be cutting the agriculture budget.

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** Who said that?

**Mr Ramsay:** I think Mike Harris said this, and this present Minister of Agriculture had said — and it is in writing in the Common Sense Revolution — that there would not be a cut to agriculture, yet we see by this budget of this year that \$82 million has been cut from the OMAFRA budget. People in rural Ontario — not just farmers; it's all the people in the agrifood industry, which is the second-largest industry in this province after the automobile industry — are very concerned about the direction of this government, especially after they had said they would preserve funding for rural Ontario and for agriculture.

I wanted to touch upon a couple of the areas that bring me great concern about this bill. Actually, my colleague from Algoma-Manitoulin had touched on one. I can give you a personal anecdote about one of these, and that is the ARDA program. As the member had mentioned, the ARDA program was a rural development program started by the last Conservative government whereby farms that were being abandoned by many small, inefficient farmers were consolidated by the government. It was really a time and a type of program where government saw an opportunity to help agriculture consolidate and expand, so they bought up a lot of the smaller farms and made them available to farmers who were growing and developing.

I say to my friend and colleague the member for Algoma-Manitoulin that I purchased one of those farms. It was one of the three farms I had, and one of them was an ARDA farm. It gave me an opportunity at that time to buy a second farm from my home farm, to be able to expand my farm operation. Some of that land — I tilled all the cleared land. I was able to rent a bulldozer and a big breaker plow. I'm sure the Minister of Agriculture would be interested in this: to picture me driving a D-8 bulldozer with a three-foot breaker plow behind, where I was able to plow under 15-foot tag alders that had grown on the previously cleared land and clear it again. That land I was then able to tile drain and redevelop a piece of land that had been abandoned by another farmer years ago.



It was a very good program. It was a transfer of farm land from farmers who were maybe going to retire, who had a small farm in the old days and milked 10 or 12 cows, say, to farmers of the next generation who were coming along but didn't have the immediate capital to expand. There was an opportunity to rent that land from the Ministry of Agriculture for a while, with an option at the end of the 10-year period to purchase that land, which I eventually did.

Today we have the situation, as the minister would know, where we have an aging farm population. I think the average age of farmers today in Ontario is around 56 to 57 years of age. I looked to the minister to correct me, but he hasn't, so I take it that's what it is. That should be a concern to a minister and other members of this Legislative Assembly for a province that prides itself as being the primary agricultural producer of this country. Not too many people appreciate that perhaps, because we think of the prairie provinces as big agricultural producers, and that they are, certainly on land base, but when it comes to total crop value and diversity of crops, the province of Ontario really is the leader in the whole agrifood industry.

Just to give you an example of the diversity of Ontario agriculture, the state of Michigan, which is very comparable both in latitude and proximity to Ontario, produces about 112 different commodities, yet here in Ontario we produce over 200, and that number is growing with the expansion of the exotic types of horticultural products and livestock products. Ontario is an extremely viable agricultural entity and obviously a part of the economy we need to expand, to nourish, so that not only can that industry nourish us in its food production but also expand its exportation of food around the world and, maybe more important, the expertise, the technical transfer of information we develop here in Ontario.

It's a very important ministry, so we don't like to see any diminishment of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, as it's now called, in this province. We think it should be, if you will, beefed up. It should be put back to the funding level it was at so that Ontario farmers and agrifood producers understand that this government, any Ontario government, wants to back this particular industry.

Part of this ARDA program, the way it developed after farmers such as myself decided either to buy the land or not, in many areas the land left over or other land amassed by the ARDA program was developed into community pastures. Many of the different counties and districts of Ontario have these community pastures. There's a big concern for the Timiskaming community pasture right now. I've been speaking to Earl Read from Thorneloe, who is the manager of the community pasture. What Earl tells me — and he's going to take me out to the community pasture on Saturday morning as part of my duties on the weekend, after being in a parade for the township of Armstrong before that on Saturday morning — is that the community pasture in Timiskaming has been self-sufficient for three years, so they are paying as they go; the user fees are there and it is a self-sufficient community pasture.

The problem is that when this government, through its business plan, insists that that community pasture divest itself of the land, we're going to find that those farmers in my area, a poorer agricultural area than that of my colleague from Essex South, for example, are not going to be able to afford to purchase that land and that pasture that has been well managed, has been amassed into a very viable community pasture accessed by many farmers, that allows them to put surplus animals on to that farm. We're going to lose that.

What's going to happen is that there's not going to be one farmer in my area who will be able to afford to buy that land. It will be broken up, and maybe other farmers or land developers or other people are going to start to buy pieces of this land. It would really be a shame to see this land broken up, to see the end of this community pasture business. And it is a business. They're running it like a business. It's self-sustainable and paying as it goes.

That would be a real shame, so I would ask the minister to look at cases such as this, to not break up these things. A previous government way back purchased this land; it's a capital expenditure that's been written off. It remains an asset for all the people of Ontario. Today it doesn't cost you anything because the taxes are being paid, all the overhead on this land is being paid. In fact, we could even look at this community pasture business over the years and maybe ask them to start to make a profit on it, and of course that profit should be turned over to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. I would have no problem with that. They could start to generate revenue for the government.

I would certainly ask the minister and the other members up there in the Tory caucus who represent rural municipalities to take a look at this before you start going holus-bolus into all these business plans that are going to disrupt many of these programs, such as the community pasture program that has been very successful across this province.

Minister, I'm very glad you're here and listening to this, and I applaud you for that. You can hear my message directly on behalf of the people I'm speaking for, and I thank you for that. What I'd ask you is to work with the people who are managing these community pastures, to find some alternative, maybe even ask them to try over the next couple of years to generate revenue for you. They're at a point where they're breaking even, as I said. Work with them and they could be generating revenue. That land remains an asset for all the people. It could really benefit areas such as mine where we're not the richest agricultural base and having access to this extra land base for pasture is a tremendous advantage.

I think the minister would agree that if we should be encouraging anything in agriculture in this province, we should be encouraging the return of the beef industry. It's a shame — the economics have made this happen — that we're losing the beef industry in this province. There's probably no better place in this country than northern Ontario to have a cow-calf operation. We could be producing calves like they do in Alberta. We could be producing all the calves for this province and they could be coming into southern Ontario, where they should be, to be fattened and fed with the grains we're growing here.



Unfortunately, what we're going to in southern Ontario is more of a cash crop situation. That's giving us environmental imbalances, as we're not creating the byproducts from animal husbandry that we should be having. If you take a look at southwestern Ontario, there's not very much livestock past Woodstock. Basically, everything west of Woodstock is cash crop; everything this side of Woodstock is more the dairy and the beef. We really could be doing something to encourage, and maybe just allowing these community pastures to remain would be a very good idea.

I would ask the minister to look at that, to work with community groups and try to preserve the community pasture base that's there. You're not doing them any favours, Minister, and I'm not asking for a government subsidy. In fact, they're at break-even now. Why don't you ask them in the next few years to start generating a profit on them and put that profit back into the ministry? I think that would be a good start. You'd be asking farmers to run these community pastures as a business, which I think you have every right to do, but please don't break them up.

Another area I want to speak to in Bill 46 is food testing. This, as you know, is a big concern to consumers out there. I know there were questions from the two opposition parties today in question period with regard to the testing of food products in Ontario.

Probably no aspect of government affects people and concerns people as much as the food we consume. I would think the average consumer would expect you, as the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, to guarantee that the food we purchase in the stores — and I like to go shopping every week in my community to meet people; I like to cook and prepare food. I like to feel confident that when I or my wife go grocery shopping, the food we are selecting in our grocery stores and markets and farmers' markets around the province is safe. We, as consumers and taxpayers, should feel that our taxpayer dollars go towards a system that would ensure the safety of our food.

1800

Minister, you know that the concerns of scientists and consumers are sometimes different in terms of what constitutes food safety. But all the areas, whether they're spray residues or different moulds or bacteria or parasites on food, all the various contaminants that can get into our food supply, are of a concern to you as the minister and to all of us as consumers. We think it's very important that we have a very strong and vigilant food inspection system. We in the Liberal caucus were very concerned that after going to court during the strike and trying to convince a judge that meat inspectors were an essential service, shortly thereafter, at the end of the strike, you fired those meat inspectors. We were quite shocked by that and we feel there should be a strong government presence when it comes to food inspection.

The same with horticultural products. Again, we believe there should be a very strong presence both from the federal government, as you mentioned in your response today in questions, and from the provincial government in food inspection. We have the very best high-tech, well-equipped labs in this province to be

available for food testing. The member for St Catharines is going to be here shortly and speak to this bill in a few minutes, and I know he knows that's important too. He comes from an area that's very heavily involved in horticultural products, in greenhousing and of course viniculture, as we have expanded our grape-growing capacity and our wine-making capacity.

All of this is very important. It's not just important for us, the consumers in Ontario, but it's very important for the reputation of Ontario foodstuffs around the world to know, as the minister does know and I'm sure is very proud of, as I am, that Ontario and Canada have some of the highest standards of food quality in the world. You don't hear of the episodes and incidents that we hear from time to time in the United States with salmonella entering our poultry, our eggs. They've had to now make permanent laws in the state of New Jersey, for instance, that you can't have a sunny-side egg in a restaurant in New Jersey. It has to be turned over and cooked solid because of the fear of salmonella poisoning. We have a very pure food supply here in this province. We're very proud of that and it's very, very important that we ensure that's there.

The concern is that as we start to privatize a lot of these functions that I think are basic functions of government, core functions, because they are consistent with public safety and security, it's very, very important that we ensure we have the very best food inspection, whether it be horticultural products or meat products in this province. It is paramount, Minister, that we do that. With your AgriCorp bill, we get very concerned that these services and these labs, as you move away from government control, might start to open the door for work that might not be up to the standard we have always insisted on and were very proud of in the province of Ontario.

The other thing, Minister — and as I said, I'm glad you're here so I can address you directly about this — is we're certainly going to be watching the changes you make to the Agricultural Research Institute of Ontario. When I was minister, I was very, very proud of that organization. I felt it was a very smart way of dealing with and coordinating agricultural research across the province to basically have a grass-roots and cross-section committee of scientific experts, academics and literally people in the field, the farmers and agrifood producers of this province, directly involved in advising the minister of the day how our agricultural budget should be spent.

I know you've changed the name, and you've also changed some of the responsibilities of the agriculture and food institute of Ontario. We certainly are going to be watching to make sure that this organization has the same say, has the same influence on the agricultural facilities in this province and the special agricultural research projects that, quite frankly, Ontario has been a leader in. I think part of the reason Ontario has been a leader in this area is because we've had that overview by the cross-section of people involved in agricultural research in this province giving advice to the ministry. Now they're going to be giving advice to the University of Guelph, which is the current authority and guiding light of all agricultural research, so we're certainly going to watch this and make sure that agricultural research is



in good hands and that we carry on to be a world-class leader.

Ontario, as you're probably aware, has been a world-class leader in many areas of agricultural research. Whether it's in artificial insemination or in the handling and breeding and feeding of our pork industry, we know that Ontario has led the way in this research. I want to make sure of the government presence in this research fiscally, that the money is there, and also morally, that the presence is there from the minister's pushing to make sure these moneys are available from the private and public sectors so we can continue the lead.

One issue I dealt with when I was minister was a trade embargo by the United States against Ontario pork. One reason Ontario pork was such a concern to the Americans was that the American processors wanted Ontario raw pork product because it was a superior product to American pork. It was because of our leading research here in Ontario, the tremendous job that pork farmers did and still do in leading the way in breeding and handling of the pork industry that American processors wanted our product. It had a better meat-to-fat ratio than the American product, so they wanted that to process their products down there.

We've been leaders, and that's given an advantage to Ontario farmers and to the Ontario economy. We don't want to see a diminishing at all of this industry. It's important that Ontario lead the way in that industry.

I see, Minister, you're finally repealing the Oleomargarine Act. This act has given many of us heartburn when it comes to that. This act I suppose has pitted one sector of the agriculture industry versus another. I know you haven't been enforcing the law over the last little while, and I certainly haven't raised that, because even though I'm a producer and I was a dairy producer at one time, in the end the consumer should have free choice of the products she or he wants in this province.

I'll give a little anecdote to the minister. As minister I was embarrassed when I was in Washington, talking to the American dairy commission. They were showing me all the different milk products they have down there and I said that soon, as I did, I would have to deal with the issue of 1% milk, that I would have to sign off to give permission to consumers in Ontario to purchase 1% milk because it had to be an order of the minister of the day to allow dairies to produce 1% milk.

I am in agreement that we've got to get out of this sort of thing. If the consumer wants a product and farmers are willing to produce the product, then let the farmers produce it. We've got to listen to the consumers out there. That's what's important.

Right now if you look at the shelves — it's great when you travel; I wish everybody would travel. When you travel, in every country one thing you've got to go to is grocery stores and you see the products there. In the United States, not only do they have all sorts of variants of milk fat in their milk products but also of milk solids, so if you're looking for more calcium or more other minerals or more protein in milk, you can buy that product in the United States. I think we've got to deregulate that part of it so the consumer can buy the product he or she wants.

1810

Another example is that maple syrup producers were very upset with me because I was going to, and I did, authorize them to blend real maple syrup with artificial syrup. I love, and I told them —

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** Shame, shame. What would they say about that in Lanark?

**Mr Ramsay:** It's a big product now, and they're selling more maple syrup than ever before, and that's what I told them. I love maple syrup and I eat 100% maple syrup on my waffles every Sunday morning, but not everybody, because it's an expensive product, can get that. We had surpluses of maple syrup in barrels in Ontario and in Quebec, so people like President's Choice said, "You know, we could blend 15% of real maple syrup with a sugar product and we could sell a lot more maple syrup." I agreed with them, and that's what's come to pass, but why we have to come to government to do this I don't know.

In this aspect of food regulation, let's get out of regulating what the consumer can buy or not buy. Let the consumer buy what he or she wants to and let's get out of that business. I'd like you to be in there inspecting products and making sure they're safe, but let's get out of the consumer's food basket. When a consumer wants a product and we've got farmers and producers and agriproducers who want to produce that, let them do that. Let's free that up so it can happen.

I conclude with that. I know my colleagues would like to comment on this and maybe the minister or some of his colleagues would like to comment too on some things I've said today.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Comments and questions?

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** I listened intently to the comments made by the member for Timiskaming, the riding just south of where I live. I can't help but think the member was trying to entice some reaction about members not participating in this debate, but the member had other things to do earlier. I gave over a one-hour speech in regard to what I think this bill means to the farmers of northern Ontario and I think a number of other members would comment on that. I will not banter with you, but I think your comments earlier on were uncalled for.

I've got to say I agree with one point in your speech in regard to the question of meat and vegetable and fruit inspectors. It seems to me that the government during the time of the OPSEU strike was quite clear and explicit about its support of meat inspection in the province of Ontario. It said if the strike didn't end, if something didn't happen, if meat inspectors didn't get back to work, people in Ontario were going to be at risk, that we needed to be able to inspect that meat, and I agree. I agreed then and I agree now. The government really made this the *raison d'être*, one issue why they felt the OPSEU strike needed to end.

In this land of Tory economics we find that the government is cutting back 80% of those inspectors. The minister today, in response to a question from Mr Hampton, the member for Rainy River, said the problem only exists in 4% of meats. I guess what he was trying to



allude to was that it didn't matter. I think it does, and the government had quite a different position during the strike. They were saying that inspection was necessary, and now that the strike is over the government is saying it is not necessary.

I say to the government that you can't say one thing one day and change your mind that way when you sit in government, because in the end you guys are really a bit much on this one.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Comments and questions? The Chair recognizes the member for Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry and East Grenville.

**Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** You got that right, Mr Speaker. In response to my colleague from Timiskaming, the man who was minister for a period of time and I was his critic, it was very interesting to note that his AgriCorp bill was brought in very shortly before the election was called. Their AgriCorp bill was pretty much the same as ours.

My concern is that today, and again during the honourable member for Timiskaming's presentation — he was worried about the inspection. The Ministry of Health is responsible for inspecting, as the former minister certainly knows. The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is responsible for advising farmers. The reason pesticide residues are being analysed is that we can advise farmers that yes, there is a residue that is higher than it should be here, and we're continuing to do that. The honourable member seemed to want to fearmonger here. They bring in the mad cow deal. Well, I'm sorry, we don't have that problem at all. It was brought in by the member of the third party who is running for leadership. I don't know whether or not he's going to use that kind of stuff to get himself elected as leader of his party on the weekend.

California strawberries, for goodness' sake — we just have a very minuscule amount of Ontario berries that are now available because the season is later. I can assure the good folks in Ontario that Ontario strawberries are very much safe. It's the American berries that we need to worry about, and that is a federal responsibility. I'm not shirking any responsibilities here, but there will be a federal-provincial ministers of agriculture meeting very shortly and we are very much discussing the inspection of produce, the inspection of meats. It should and probably will become a federal responsibility and uniform across the country, as it should be.

**Mr Michael Brown:** I appreciated very much the comments from the member for Timiskaming, a former Minister of Agriculture and a superb Minister of Agriculture who visited my constituency on more than one occasion in that capacity. I can recall us out on Oliver Runnalls' farm on Berry Island having a look at his beef herd, and over at Bill Clark's in Gordon township having a look at Bill's state-of-the-art dairy operation. That's what I would like to remind the minister of today in particular.

We in our part of northern Ontario, and I suspect all across northern Ontario, are very concerned with the fact that the minister has not seen fit to hold hearings across

northern Ontario with the new pooling arrangement for fluid milk. My farmers and producers are concerned and we would like, and would have liked, the ministry to hold hearings on this issue in the northern constituencies. What surprised us is that under the former government there had been a review of this whole issue. The issue had been decided, and nothing was to happen under the old regime, but out of nowhere the minister appears to have directed the board to decide that we would eliminate those pools. That is a concern of my constituents, and those people would like the opportunity to just have some input, to be able to talk about it. They are not necessarily opposed, but they thought there should be a consultation on this very important issue, and we are very disappointed the ministry would not do that.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments? Seeing none, the member for Timiskaming has two minutes.

**Mr Ramsay:** First off, I'd like to say to the member for Cochrane South that I didn't mean any criticism. I was more or less startled when I got up, because I thought we were in rotation with the other parties. I hadn't realized, because I was in committee, that the third party had spent all its time in one speech, so I apologize to the member if he took any umbrage from that.

As I said before, I appreciate that the minister is here to listen, because it's not in every case where we debate a bill that we can directly give our message from our constituents to the minister involved sponsoring the bill, and that's an opportunity that we cherish. We're glad that he's here and took part in the debate and responded back.

I would just like to reiterate that we have concerns with this bill. We have concerns not necessarily with the direction but with the haste that you move with this direction. We want to make sure that you consult, that you work with the people involved and that you're giving the people involved the time to adjust to this, that you're there to make sure that where government is needed to be there to make sure the controls and regulations when it comes to the safety and security of our food supply are in place, they're secured by government employees. We think that's important and we ask you to keep that.

We also ask you to keep your promise to make sure the budget is there for agriculture. It is an industry that I think is just on the cusp of growing again because, as you know, we have a hungry world out there. Many of the expanding countries of the world are having, again, the inability to produce food for themselves. We are well positioned here in Ontario to start to feed the world again, and I think it's very important for the minister to make sure we have a very strong government presence in this industry in this country.

1820

**The Deputy Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for St Catharines.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Thank you very much for the opportunity to address issues related to agriculture in this bill this afternoon, or now this evening, because there are a number of issues which are very important to the farmers in the Niagara region and, I'm sure, across this province.



What I am concerned about is what this bill doesn't address, and I relate it to the tax cut. I think it all can be related back to the tax cut. Let me tell you why I relate it to the tax cut. The government of Ontario has decided it is going to give a 30% income tax cut to the people of this province, with the most wealthy and influential people of course getting the most money from the tax cut. As I've said on many occasions, the people at the Albany Club think this is a great measure.

If the government wanted to give a token tax cut, a small tax cut to show a general direction, a lot of people out there probably would have nodded and said, "That makes some sense to at least show a direction." What I'm getting from people across the province is that they're wondering how good Conservatives like the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and others could contemplate having to borrow 13 billion additional dollars — that's not million, that's billion — to finance this tax cut, to give money to Conrad Black and to others in this province who are making a lot of money and are going to be the greatest beneficiaries of this.

I say to members of the Legislature that my good friend the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, who wants to have the appropriate resources to carry out his responsibilities, who wants to have an adequate budget, is having that budget robbed from him by the fact that the Premier and some of the right-wing zealots have decided that they must proceed, no matter what, with this 30% income tax cut benefiting the richest people in our society.

Meanwhile, the farmers who have been reliant upon the Ministry of Agriculture for support and adequate services are going to pay the penalty for that ideological initiative of the government. At the same time, the government's going to have to borrow 13 billion additional dollars just within its term of office so it can give the money to other people.

I'm talking to a lot of Conservatives out there who say: "I didn't know that, and if I had known that, I'd be prepared to say: 'Noble Villeneuve, you keep the money to look after the farmers. We understand and want you to find certain efficiencies, and we'll support that. We understand that over a period of four years, you're going to have to phase in some changes. We understand that. But we wonder why you're moving so quickly and so drastically with these cuts that are going to hurt farmers and ultimately the consumers of this province.'" That's the Conservatives who are saying that to me.

Some of the Conservatives who are very concerned about the cuts — not just borrowing the money, but the cuts — are saying: "I remember when Premier Davis and Premier Robarts and Bob Welch," my good friend the previous member for St Catharines-Brock, "and Tom Wells and all the moderates, Mr Newman, who was the Minister of Agriculture, and other ministers of agriculture, said: 'We're going to help farmers in this province. We're going to have an adequate Ministry of Agriculture and Food.'" The ministers of agriculture said, "We know we can count on Premier Davis and even W. Darcy McKeough," who was the Treasurer of the province at the time, "to provide us with adequate funds to carry out our responsibilities."

Now the ideologues have taken over, the right wing, the people who import their ideas from the extreme right wing of the Republican Party. The Republican guard has taken over, including the people who advise the Premier. I don't believe for a moment that people like my good friend the member for St Catharines-Brock can be supporting the kind of cuts we're seeing in the Ministry of Agriculture. He was probably one of the people — I don't know if he signed the letter; I didn't investigate that. I know that Barb Fisher and Bill Vankoughnet and Helen Johns and Bert Johnson and Gary Stewart and Toby Barrett, all members of the Legislature, signed it, and I'm sympathetic with the letter they sent to the Premier of this province, all these individuals, because I know they were fighting for their constituents.

They must have been disappointed, as I am disappointed, the 13 Tory MPPs who signed the letter requesting that Mr Harris uphold his promise to protect agricultural funding. I know they have to be, quietly, behind closed doors, expressing that concern — not too loudly, if they want to get into the cabinet. If they want to get into the cabinet, the only thing they'll be doing loudly is laughing at the Premier's jokes. Other than that, they won't be saying too much too loudly.

But where they can put some influence — the Minister of Transportation is here. He sits around the important table over there, the cabinet table, and if you're good to him and make persuasive arguments, I know he will bring the message to the Premier of this province and to the Minister of Finance about the need for adequate funding for the Ministry of Agriculture. I will support those members of the government caucus who are fighting for that, and I'll support them publicly.

We have some problems in agriculture that this bill will address and some that this bill won't address. Not everything contained in the bill is going to be bad. We don't think that. Some of the provisions, as my colleagues have said, have some merit, and others are not so useful. We see user fees coming about.

You might get the tax break, Conrad, or — we used to say E.P. Taylor in years gone by, but the wealthiest people — Trevor Eyton. You may get your break, but I'm going to tell you that the farmers of the Niagara region are going to start paying user fees so you can have that tax break, so you can get another yacht or whatever it is that you happen to get. Meanwhile, the poor farmers of Bruce county and of Niagara and of other areas of the province, Oxford, are going to pay the price. They're going to be paying those user fees while the richest and most influential people get a huge tax break.

I don't believe that the more moderate members of the caucus — and there are some; they're hard to identify some days, but the more moderate members, and I see some of them in the House today — would agree with that. Behind closed doors, when they get in that caucus meeting, I think they must speak out, of course until the Premier walks into the room, but previous to that, they must speak out.

We have the issue of the food inspectors. This is always a difficult issue for people on farms to deal with. You see, I've always thought we in Ontario could be and continue to be proud of our produce. It's high-quality



produce. Our farmers are careful about the way they produce it and they've had the protection of inspectors. But now we see the provincial government withdrawing that. It's all well and good to talk about the cuts, but this is what the Republican guard brings about, the advisers to the Premier, the zealots who talk about what's happened in New Jersey and other places and tell the Premier and the inner circle that this is the course to follow. This is what you end up with: these kinds of cuts.

This crosses party lines. This isn't where it's Conservatives, Liberals, New Democrats. It's people concerned, first of all, the consumers. They want to know they're getting good produce. They know they've got it in the past in Ontario and they believe they're getting it now, but they look to the future and say, "What happens when we start losing these inspectors?" It's not just in this field. I think of restaurant inspectors. The Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations is trying to dump a number of inspectors for the drinking establishments in the province. As soon as you take these people away, as soon as you take that outside enforcement branch away, you find that problems arise and people's confidence starts to wane. I don't want confidence in our food supply in Ontario to wane, because I think our farmers have worked too hard and our consumers have built up too much trust to have that dashed by the Minister of Agriculture and Food being forced by his government to cut those inspectors.

Farmers like that. Sure, sometimes they may feel the inspectors are intrusive and perhaps they don't always like to see them show up at the gate. But when the farmers can say to the people of this province, "Look, I don't know what happens in California or Georgia or Chile, but I'll tell you one thing: in Ontario our food is inspected very adequately," that gives us all a good feeling and it gives the farmers some confidence when they're going out to sell their produce. I'm one who buys Ontario product. I make a definite choice and I'm sure many people do, but the average consumer has to know that there is safety there.

**1830**

I notice there was an article on June 15 in the *Globe and Mail* which dealt with this, which said:

"Nearly all the inspectors who help monitor Ontario produce for pesticide residues are being eliminated to save money, but the province's agriculture minister says consumers who are concerned about contaminants in food should send the food to the government for testing."

That's not practical. One thing you always said of the Davis regime was that they were practical, not ideological. They would look at something like this and say: "That in theory may sound good, but it doesn't work that way. It's not easily done. Let's do something that's practical and reasonable."

It goes on to say:

"Any individual who feels that there may be a problem, the individuals or the consumers, they're certainly welcome to send their samples," said Noble Villeneuve.

"But consumers may find it challenging to take up Mr Villeneuve's offer.

"An official at the government laboratory in Guelph that does the testing said it costs between \$250 to \$1,000

a sample. And fresh produce sent through the mail would not arrive in any shape to be tested.

"Consumers would probably have to buy coolers and icebags for their samples, and to deliver them through couriers who guarantee overnight delivery.

"Food safety lobbyists ridiculed the suggestion that people should send such items as cucumbers, beans and apples to the government for testing.

"How dare they suggest the public should do that? How dare they?" exclaimed Bonnie Walter, a spokeswoman for the Pesticide Action Group of Ontario, who called the idea 'laughable.'"

The point I'm making is that this isn't one side against another, in my view, nor should it be. It should be consumers and farmers on the same side. I can remember when we used to do the testing, the Ministry of the Environment, along with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, and when we found certain things that nobody liked to hear about, we put the facts and figures out there. We found our product in Ontario compared very favourably to other product, and I was pleased to see that. People knew it because we were doing the testing, people knew it because we had the inspectors. They had that confidence, and I don't want to see that confidence lost.

There's another area I've become concerned about. We in Canada, certainly in Ontario, have been well served over the years by our meat inspectors and the meat inspection system. I well recall during the OPSEU strike, during the provincial government strike, that there were government members and opposition members up in arms at the fact that there was not an adequate number of people to inspect the meat and for some people, it really hurt their businesses in a bad fashion. Then the government turns around and says, after the strike, "We don't need these meat inspectors." You can't have it both ways. You can't say how important they were during the strike, for political purposes or whatever purposes — I think the backbench members who brought it to the attention were honest. They were not playing political games; they knew the problem that existed. But after the strike, the government suddenly says, "Oh, we don't need all these meat inspectors."

Look what happened in Britain. It hasn't happened here. I think it hasn't happened here because we've had a good inspection system, a good regulatory system. What's happened in Britain is costing farmers millions upon millions of dollars, maybe billions, because I think they haven't been adequate in their inspections in Britain and the policies they've undertaken have caused great problems for their meat industry.

Here in Ontario that hasn't happened, but it looms out there that something could happen in the future if the meat inspectors are withdrawn and the regulations are changed. Let's keep the quality of life in this province. Let's keep those inspectors. They're worthwhile. People are prepared to pay a little more for food to have it and people are prepared to pay a little more in terms of their taxes to have that safety factor there. That's the difference between Canada and some other jurisdictions. We Canadians have been prepared to pay a little more for a better quality of life. Others say, "Just leave it to the market," or "Leave it to chance." We Canadians haven't



done so, and I commend past governments and present governments who have followed that policy and farmers who have been supportive of that policy.

When I see this article in the *Globe and Mail*, I become concerned both for consumers and for our producers. I want both to feel that our supply is safe.

I looked at some of the cuts that took place in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, and I found it difficult to believe. I have been in this House since 1977, and successive Conservative members have stated the importance of having a strong Ministry of Agriculture and Food. But I found out — and listen, they were difficult economic times; I don't want to pretend they weren't. From 1990 to 1995 agriculture funding was cut by 25% while overall government spending rose by 14%. The member for Cochrane South explained why that was and how they went through restructuring, how difficult it was. One would have thought when they reached that point that the ministry was really not in a position to take further cuts. I'm sure that's why Mike Harris during the election campaign said he wouldn't cut funding to agriculture. He probably believed that sufficient cuts and reorganization and restructuring had already taken place.

The Conservative Party promised that there would be "no funding cuts to agriculture programs under the Common Sense Revolution." I think a lot of people believed that. Obviously, a lot of people in the rural areas did, because there was considerable support for the Conservative Party there. They felt they were going to be protected, but they found out differently a little later on. Since the 1995 election, the Conservative government has chopped about \$26 million from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs' budget. These cuts included reducing agricultural subsidy programs by \$11.3 million, closing and reducing local field offices and cutting farm tax rebate funding by \$4.8 million.

I've always said, even though I represent an overwhelmingly urban riding — there are few farms in the riding — that I think we as a society have an obligation to our farmers to do one of two things: We either pay the kind of prices that are necessary to ensure viable farms, or we have to be prepared to subsidize or assist them in other ways. They must have one of the two, otherwise they can't continue to exist.

I have been a strong proponent over the years, and continue to be, of the preservation of agricultural land in this province. My friend the Minister of Agriculture and Food I know has been conscious of this and has certainly been supportive of saving agricultural farm land as much as possible, particularly that which is class 1 and class 2.

In the Niagara Peninsula we have a unique situation. We have good soils but, as important, we also have favourable climatic conditions. From the top of the escarpment to the bottom of the escarpment, the difference in the number of growing days is about 27 or 28 growing days. That means we can produce tender fruit in the Niagara Peninsula. We also have, in much of the Niagara Peninsula, the soils conducive to that.

When I drive along the QEW and see those warehouses going up that don't employ a lot of people — I know people applaud that sometimes; they say that's progress. I'm going to tell you, driving from the city of Cleveland,

outside the city of Cleveland, isn't progress to me. It has no beauty and it's not an attractive sight. The agriculture in our peninsula is first of all important economically, far more important than people will ever concede. Second, it's a tourist attraction in addition to that, because people like going through the peninsula and enjoying much of the rural area.

My friend the member for St Catharines-Brock has agricultural land. I know he enjoys it. His family has been in the farming business over the years, and he would appreciate it and knows the kind of pressures put on him by people to start subdividing or at least giving severances. It's more difficult to resist severances when it's difficult to be a viable farmer. That's why I think we have to help our farmers be viable across the province, because once you start giving severances, it's death by a thousand cuts. That's exactly what happens.

You have the urban people move out to the countryside because they want to enjoy it, but they forget that when you get out into the countryside the odours aren't the same as the city, necessarily, because of the animals or the vegetation that may be out there or the fertilizing that has to take place. They start phoning everybody, including the Ministry of Environment, and say, "This is a pollution problem." Then they don't like hearing the sound of the bird-bangers. The bird-bangers are those noisemakers that clap like that very loudly for a couple of weeks while the tender fruit is out. It's supposed to scare the birds away. Some farmers say they're not all that effective, but at least it's some defence to try to scare the birds away.

When I was Minister of the Environment, they would phone the environment ministry and say, "This is disruptive." I would not interfere in the internal workings of the Ministry of the Environment in terms of its enforcement, but I used to wish that somehow we had other things to do. But we have to respond to these complaints. The urban people didn't like the noise out there, they don't like the smell, they don't like the dust and they don't like the disruption. Well, too bad.

1840

**Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** So why did they go there?

**Mr Bradley:** A good question. They went there because somebody granted severances and allowed them to move out there, and we started to put subdivisions out in those areas when we should be putting them in areas designated for urban growth, not in the suburban areas.

In the peninsula we are busy as well building houses for people who work in Toronto. I don't see any benefit in being a bedroom community for Toronto. The people who work in Toronto tend to be more oriented to Toronto, they tend to spend a lot of their money there and they're not always as rooted in the community — I'm not saying everybody. If you said we were building a housing development in the middle of Vineland or Beamsville or Niagara-on-the-Lake because there are some new industries coming in or some new job opportunities so people from the area want to move into them, I could see that making some sense, but we're not. We're simply building them for other people and using good agricultural land in doing so when there is agricultural land in the province



that is not as good and climatic conditions that are not as good that would allow for some growth, and there's a need for some intensification to take place in our urban areas as well.

I want to clearly help out the farmers in our province. I feel very strongly about that. I think we have an obligation not only to the people of our province and the people of our country, but to the people of our world in terms of what we can do in agriculture, in terms of the products we grow. In addition to that, there is money to be made for Canadians to do so. We have to be fair to farmers by supporting them either by paying an adequate price or by assisting them in some other way.

There's a project in the Niagara Peninsula that I'm very worried about. I think it's called the Twenty Valley Reserve. This is an example of a subdivision — of course they're itching to get it; they'd love nothing better, and excuse me for saying this, than for the rich people and the influential people — I know that makes you roll your eyes. That's who want to build on the escarpment. They would like to have their estate homes up on the side of the escarpment to look over it and enjoy it.

One thing my friend Norm Sterling did — I praise him to this day even though I may be critical of him in other areas — he helped establish the Niagara Escarpment Commission which helps to protect some farm land. I know he supports it today, yet I see the Twenty Valley Reserve proposal for a subdivision coming forward. It's going to land on somebody's desk over there. I hope the member for Oxford, who I think is a person who listens to these arguments in the House and is concerned about preserving agricultural land, will be good enough to pass the word along to the powers that be that that is not a good development, in my view, and maybe in his view when he investigates. I'll leave it up to him to make that judgement.

I see that as the start of further development. I look at Grimsby, and right under the escarpment and right on that great agricultural land we see new subdivisions going in. I sat on a municipal council — we've all listened to municipal councillors and so on; some are good friends of mine and some do an outstanding job — but very often there are people at the local level who aren't happy until they've paved every last square inch of agricultural land. They say: "That's progress. We've got to grow and progress." Meanwhile we see — the member makes the money sign and he's right — it's money they're looking at, but not necessarily the long-term good of the area.

I become concerned at that, because there are studies out. Dr Joseph Kushner, a Brock University economist of the small-c conservative bent, did a study, along with other professors at the university, on the advantages to municipalities of the additional assessment and found out that there was no advantage — in many cases a disadvantage — because the cost of that development to the municipality was greater than the assessment which was gained, the ongoing cost. So it doesn't make sense in many cases.

Promotion of Ontario products: My friend from St Catharines-Brock and I are great proponents of promoting Ontario product. We believe there can be a lot of innovative — my friend from Niagara Falls wants to be inclu-

ded in this, so he is certainly supportive. We want to see our people have some assistance in promoting our product and promoting it themselves because we think we have good product in the Niagara Peninsula and that it can be appropriately promoted.

That's why we need the LCBO. People will say, "What does the LCBO ever have to with agriculture?" The Liquor Control Board of Ontario is a vehicle we can use legitimately, even with all the international trade agreements, to at least give a fair shake to Ontario wines. There was a time many years ago when the LCBO used to feature a lot of French and Italian and Spanish wines and so on, and they would get the most prominence. Today people have discovered, largely through the promotion we've done and through really hard work by farmers and wineries, that we have excellent wine products in Ontario, but we need the LCBO to continue to do that.

I hear the right-wing zealots say ideologically: "We can't have this; this is a crown corporation. We've got to give it to our free-enterprise friends." I won't get into the other reasons, which are contained in many petitions that I provide, but one reason I want to talk about very briefly this afternoon is that we can promote our own products in Ontario, particularly our wine products.

I want to commend Andy Brandt, who is now the chair of the LCBO, on the work he has done. I thought that was an excellent appointment on the part of the New Democratic government. It was supported by all parties because we all know the kind of salesperson Andy Brandt is and his commitment to the wine industry. I know my friends in the Niagara Peninsula who aren't as ideologically to the right, at least some of them, as perhaps some advisers to the Premier will want to fight for the continuation of the LCBO for that reason alone.

I point out that Mott's is closing. For those who don't know, Mott's employed 175 people in St Catharines, and there was a recent announcement made by the major grape juice processor that its St Catharines plant would close this year, and frankly, it caught us off balance. We thought it would continue on successfully.

**Mr Frank Klees (York-Mackenzie):** Are you off balance?

**Mr Bradley:** No. It caught our industry off balance.

We have only a few months to find a replacement processor for some 14,000 tons of grapes a year, which is clearly worrisome. The positive side includes a strongly established market across Canada for Ontario grape juice under the Welch's label resulting from the superior flavour of the Concord and Niagara varieties grown in this province. The state-of-the-industry paper that is enclosed by John Neufeld as the chair of the Ontario Grape Growers' Marketing Board will be very helpful. Here are some recommendations. I don't have time to read them all, but my colleagues and I from the Niagara Peninsula commend this to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs as good reading and some excellent recommendations on how we can help our farmers.

I look at this bill and I say, "What does this bill do?" For one thing, it provides an opportunity, some would say — I say a detrimental opportunity — for people to



have to pay user fees in this province to pay for the tax cut the Premier and the Treasurer and a few other people have decided is absolutely necessary.

I see cuts in the agricultural budget. I will stand in this House any day of the week and defend the Minister of Agriculture, help him out with his cabinet colleagues and help to speak to the Minister of Transportation about the need for adequate funding. The Minister of Transportation lives in an area where there used to be farms, and probably there still are a lot of farms up there in his area, and he would know the importance of farming, so he would be standing shoulder to shoulder, side by side with the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs in defending an adequate budget to carry out the responsibilities of that ministry.

I call upon all my friends in the Conservative caucus and the other caucuses to move forward to assist farmers in this province so that we have a viable industry not only this year and next but for many years to come, and when we look back or write our memoirs as individuals wish to — I won't be doing it, but others may be writing their memoirs — they can say, "When agriculture in this province needed my assistance, I was there to stand side by side, shoulder to shoulder with the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the farmers of the province of Ontario."

1850

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Ted Chudleigh):** Questions or comments? The member for Cochrane South.

**Mr Bisson:** I want to comment on the member for St Catharines's speech, in which he pointed out that a big part of what this bill is all about is paying for the tax cut, and he's right. The member is totally right that the government in its effort to pass a tax cut on to the residents of Ontario is scurrying around every ministry out there trying to find ways to make savings to pay for that tax cut.

As the member put it quite well in his speech, at some point we have to ask ourselves the question, how badly do we want a tax cut? If it means the tax cut is going to put in want the farmers of this province from all across Ontario, northern Ontario especially for me; if it means we're going to have a lesser system of education, under which our children will find it more difficult to access quality education, especially at the post-secondary levels with higher tuition fees; if it means health care will become a user-pay system, which is quite possible under what the government has done under Bill 26; if it means our long-term-care system will end up being privatized — because that is the policy of the government, moving to what they call managed care: 90% privatized this year, 80% the year after, allowed 70% in the third year, and finally, all bets are off after — then I say the price of the tax cut is too expensive.

I agree with the member for St Catharines that what we really need to be doing in this Legislature is dealing with public policy for the people of Ontario. The last time I checked, the definition of "public policy" was policies that benefit the people of this province who find themselves by far the majority, that is, the working people of this province, the retirees of this province and other people who make up the majority.

If we in this Legislature follow the agenda of the Conservative government — not Al Palladini's, for sure. My friend, I know, is an honourable member. The government is saying it is going to cater to a certain segment of the population that has big bucks and make sure it's good for them and not good for others. I say the price of that tax cut is far too expensive and we should get back to common sense and deal with legislation for the people of Ontario.

**Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent):** I'd like to take this opportunity to make a couple of comments to the honourable member for St Catharines. It's always one of the pleasures of being in the House to listen to the member for St Catharines. His many years of experience show when he gets up to speak. I must compliment him. He comes from, in his estimation, a predominantly urban riding, yet he certainly knows much about agriculture.

He likes to talk about the tax break and the minuses of the tax break, that all the rich people who are going to get the tax break are going to buy new boats and those kind of things. I just want to remind him that all the farmers will also be able to avail themselves of the advantages of that tax break.

A couple of other things: He talked about meat inspectors and about the scare tactics of meat inspectors. This bill has nothing to do with meat inspectors. There has been a change there but it doesn't have anything to do with the quality of the meat; it's just a different way of doing the inspections. He talked about fruit and vegetable inspections and how that was going to have a negative impact. I'm sure he knows, because of his great knowledge of agriculture, standing shoulder to shoulder with Noble Villeneuve and so on, that the inspectors inspect for grading and quality, nothing to do with pesticides. That comes under the Ministry of Health.

Just a last little comment. He did make some reference to the precious agricultural land. I'm from Kent county, and we also have very precious agricultural land. He talked about seeing the buildings along the Queen Elizabeth Way and the industry and what a terrible thing it was. I'd just like to say to him that I would be happy to welcome those industries from the Queen Elizabeth Way that he doesn't like down into Kent county because we have some land we could put them on.

**Mr Toni Skarica (Wentworth North):** I likewise find it always very educational to listen to the member for St Catharines. He reminds me of the principles of a great speech. A great speech, it is said, has an introduction and a conclusion and very little in between. When I listen to that member, I'm reminded of those very important principles.

The opposition has hinted that somehow the members of the public should be wary of food supplies in the province, that due to Conservative policies the food supplies are not safe. I would ask the members of the public, when they listen to their arguments, to listen to them carefully, to watch the members very carefully, and then, using their eyes and ears, I would say the public has to come to one inescapable truth, and that truth is that the opposition members have ample confidence in the food supplies of this province.



**Mr Tom Froese (St Catharines-Brock):** I appreciate the comments from the member for St Catharines. He is a great orator and always has been, and his comments are always well thought out. But I'm a little bit confused about what he's been saying, especially since the Harris government has taken over. He actually agrees with the former Davis government. He talks about my predecessor, on the Conservative side anyway, Mr Bob Welch.

**Mr Bradley:** A moderate guy.

**Mr Froese:** A moderate guy. That's what he said, and he said it again. But if my memory serves me correctly, when the Davis government was in power, the member was very critical of the government and what it did in its policies. Mind you, he expressed his opinions very diplomatically and very delicately, but he was very critical of the Davis years as well. I can only come to the conclusion that after the Harris government has been in power 20 years, he'll agree that what we did was what was required and what was right.

But he's concerned about agriculture, and rightfully so, and I am as well. I have agriculture in my family, in my background. The problem over the years — I won't have enough time to finish what I want to say — is that previous governments lacked direction and leadership, and this is exactly what this bill does: talks about core business services, talks about investment attractions, market development, talks about outcomes. How do we measure those things? It talks about proposed performances. I think that's what agriculture is all about today, and I'm looking for his support of this bill.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for St Catharines, two minutes to wrap up.

**Mr Bradley:** Thank you for allowing me to wrap up on this and to comment on the comments. First of all, I would say that I knew when the Davis government was in power that their members would be able to rise in the House and compliment themselves. Members of the government, governing parties — that's generic — have a third hand to pat themselves on the back, so the opposition doesn't have to do that. But there were many occasions, I think — I can't always recall this — where I was probably complimentary of the Davis administration. Mr Welch did note to me the other day that he couldn't recall too many occasions where I was forthcoming with that praise, but sometimes in retrospect one is able to make a better assessment of a government.

The member for Wentworth North has suggested that the members of the opposition are telling people to beware of the food supply. I think what we're saying is that it's in the future; we have to look into the future when these changes are made. Today and in the past, people have been very confident in the food supply. Farmers could be justifiably proud of that and know that they had the inspection and the inspectors to back it up. That's why we could have that confidence. What I fear is happening in the future is that if the government decides to proceed with these cuts, that could make the consumer more apprehensive and the farmers less secure. That's why I want to support the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs in getting adequate funding so he can retain those inspectors.

There were certain aspects about which I was critical of the previous Conservative government. I don't want to suggest to the member for St Catharines-Brock that I wasn't. When the Premier and his cabinet were going to buy a Challenger jet for the comfort and convenience of the cabinet and senior government officials, I stood daily in the House and suggested they shouldn't be doing so. When they bought Suncor, when they intruded into the private sector to buy Suncor at a great cost to the people of this province, I was critical of that.

But there are many policies that I happen to agree with, and that is why from time to time I will send accolades in the direction of the previous Conservative administration.

1900

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** I'd like to take the opportunity this evening to address some comments on behalf of the farmers in my part of eastern Ontario to Bill 46, the so-called agriculture omnibus bill. My constituency is one that has some agriculture. My colleague Mr Jordan, the member for Lanark and south Renfrew, probably represents more of the agricultural area of the county of Renfrew, but certainly in and around villages like Beachburg and Cobden and Douglas, to name but three in the Ottawa Valley, there is an active agricultural community, and over the course of the last number of years, it's been my pleasure to have worked alongside members of the farm community to hear their hopes and aspirations and, yes, to hear their concerns about what governments of all political stripes were doing or not doing as far as their interests are concerned.

Like the minister from the far part of eastern Ontario, of course I have some experience with interprovincial issues as they touch upon farm matters. As you will know better than most, Mr Speaker, southwestern Quebec is an area of some active agriculture, particularly the dairy sector, and one always has an opportunity to compare and contrast provincial policies between Ontario and Quebec.

Members who have spoken before me have touched on a number of issues. I want to begin my remarks tonight by commenting on a couple of perhaps obscure components of this bill. I look on page 40, and I know, Mr Speaker, your late grandfather would certainly want the Legislature to observe the repeal, at long last, of the Oleomargarine Act. For members of this Legislature, I'm sure even the word must strike them as arcane, but it is an interesting story in the protective interest of Ontario agriculture, Canadian agriculture. I'm sorry my friend from Moose Creek is not here because, I'll tell you, there was a time when no agriculture minister, particularly from the eastern counties of Stormont or Dundas or Glengarry would have the nerve to stand up in this Legislature and say anything but the most positive things about the Oleomargarine Act. We repeal it in Bill 46. It's over and done with, and so ends 110 years of some of the most remarkable protection in Ontario and Canadian agriculture.

In fact, an old prof of mine a few years ago, a very fine fellow named Welf Heick, now retired from Wilfrid Laurier University, wrote a fascinating book called *A Propensity to Protect: Butter, Margarine and the Rise of*



Urban Culture in Canada. This is a story about the dairy lobby and how, in Parliament and in various legislatures, there was a consistent bipartisan attack on margarine. It is an interesting book, and I'm not going to bore you very much, but I thought it interesting that one quotation from the Farmer's Advocate of 1894 on this subject reads as follows:

"Ministers of Agriculture, Dominion Commissioners, Tories, Grits, Patrons, Yankees, Senators, Knights, Members of Parliament, Ministers of the Gospel, Doctors and Citizens generally were all one in their allegiance and loyalty to the kingdom of the cow."

Well, with the repeal of the Oleomargarine Act, the kingdom of the cow is now open to bidders on all sides. In fact, my friend from Montague is here. He may very well remember — I know the minister will remember; it's in my time here — that there were inspectors running up and down the Ottawa River to make sure that that terrible Quebec margarine wasn't invading the Ontario market. It seems kind of comical now, but we did, we had inspectors out there and they were at those interprovincial bridges and they were in food stores in Pembroke and Renfrew to make bloody sure that there was not oleomargarine, which of course was a French product — God forbid — invading the exclusive preserve of the Ontario market. So just for the record, let me at least observe the final passage and the funeral rite for the Ontario Oleomargarine Act.

I see as well that we are repealing the Agricultural Rehabilitation and Development Act, ARDA. Again, if you represent my part of eastern Ontario, a formal conclusion and a formal repeal of ARDA is a reminder that there was a time when the Ontario and the federal governments sought to do something about the increasingly depopulated and by and large marginal agricultural lands of certainly my part of eastern Ontario, the upper Ottawa Valley. With Bill 46 we are admitting that this experiment is now formally over, and the repeal of the so-called ARDA is contained in this omnibus legislation.

I don't want to be mischievous, because it's a very pleasant and congenial crowd. I see His Honour Judge Guzzo has arrived. I know better than to tease the bears, but I do have to say — and I'm sorry that the member for Etobicoke-Humber is gone because he seemed to be a little bit irked at some of the observations of my colleagues the member for Timiskaming and the member for St Catharines. I will excuse the class of 1995 from any of the observations I too will make. But you know, the class of 1990 and the class of 1983, I say to Mr Villeneuve, must bear some responsibility for what they said in the period of, in Mr Villeneuve's case, 1983 to 1995. Because whether it was in Moose Creek, Morrisburg, Maxville or most of the rest of the province, Noble Villeneuve was categorical: "Elect us and there will be no further cuts." I heard him say it. I read it. I read it in the Glengarry News, the Prescott Journal, the Tweed News, the Eganville Leader. It was very declaratory.

I wonder what they're thinking now, I say to my good friend from Hastings, good fellow that he is and very prudent politician, unlike some of his colleagues. I wonder what they're saying now in Napanee, Stirling and Picton. "No more cuts? Well, they just closed our ag

office and Noble Villeneuve was the one who turned the key and closed the door and walked away." You see, this wasn't some Grit or some New Democrat making these solemn promises. It was my good friend from Moose Creek.

I look at the budget presented to the House here a few weeks ago and the budget line for agriculture is not going up; it is not standing still; it is trending downwards in a considerable fashion. I understand why. I understand entirely why. The Minister of Finance, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, has some very severe pressures that must be dealt with, and agriculture must do its share. I've been reading the farm press in the last couple of months, and to watch Noble Villeneuve, the pride of Moose Creek, twist in the wind, where he's now saying, "Well, you know, I said it then, but now we in OMAFRA want to be part of the solution," I don't doubt that he does.

But you see, there's the problem of what he solemnly promised throughout months and years of saying: "Give me the chain of office. Let me sit on the treasury bench and I promise there will be no further program cuts." Anybody who knows anything about government in the 1990s would certainly think that's a very brazen thing for anyone of Mr Villeneuve's intelligence and experience to say, but he said it. He said it often. Now we have of course the reality of June 8, 1995. Now, in places like Fenwick and St Thomas and Stirling and Kapuskasing and six other places, the ag offices, are closed down.

The minister will say, "I will be much more efficient," but you see, I say to my friend —

**Mr Baird:** Spend more money.

**Mr Conway:** No, no, this is all about what Mr Villeneuve said and did. I'm not the one who made the commitment.

1910

**Mr Baird:** What about Renfrew?

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. A little decorum, please.

**Mr Conway:** That's true, I said that. The Renfrew office is not yet closed. I hope it isn't closed, but my friends and relatives who work in the Ontario department of agriculture tell me that it's a very active place these days. My friends and relatives in the Ministry of Agriculture tell me that before the maple leaves turn in September we will have much more to report to the good burghers of Hastings and Lanark and Prince Edward and elsewhere. We shall see what we shall see.

I must observe again some of the comments that have been made with respect to Bill 46. AgriCorp: It's true what the minister says, that the Peterson government and the Rae government had AgriCorp legislation. We now see Bill 46, which is the example of the —

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** The wisdom to follow through.

**Mr Conway:** I say to the rather loquacious member from Scarborough —

**Mr Jim Flaherty (Durham Centre):** Can't you say a simple sentence?

**Mr Conway:** The rules of the place suggest that you can be loquacious if you have the floor, and I happen to have the floor. I say to the member from Scarborough-Canadian Tire, if he wants the floor, he simply has to stand in his place and join the debate.



I simply note as well that the government has, through AgriCorp, some rather creative plans for user fees. Boy, are there going to be user fees. I hate to say this to my friend the minister of highways. I got my motor vehicle registration the other day. Wow, talk about user fees. "We're not going to raise taxes. Oh, no. We are just going to tax you with a range of user fees that is going to be very impressive." I suspect before the maple leaves turn their autumnal red, farmers of Ontario are going to find out that AgriCorp is User Fee Central, that whether it's lab charges or veterinary services or whatever, there will be an array of user fees that is going to make the good people of Lanark and Renfrew wonder what they embraced when they said, "Give us the Tory agriculture plan and there'll be no cuts and we will have good core programs and business will continue."

I want, in the time permitted this afternoon, to touch on a couple of other issues of concern to me and the people I represent in the upper Ottawa Valley, the farmers especially. There is a very great concern about the future of the Kemptville agricultural college. A memorandum of understanding has been signed between the three agricultural colleges and the University of Guelph. I know from talking to friends of mine in southwestern Ontario and in eastern Ontario that farm leaders do not feel like they are in the loop at all on this one. I have a farm publication — I'm not even going to refer to it — where they clearly in their most recent journal indicate a complaint about being kept out of the loop and in the dark about what is specifically going to be the end result of this new arrangement.

If I were at Kemptville and someone told me that now I was going to be thrown in with the University of Guelph, and I knew something about the funding cuts that were going to apply to the post-secondary sector generally, I think I would be getting gas, because that would make me think that —

**Mr Baird:** Dave Ramsay sits right behind him.

**Mr Conway:** My friend the member for Nepean is just so jocular. I want to say to him and to anyone else from eastern Ontario that over the course of many decades, because a very strong Tory politician from a place called Kemptville, Howard Ferguson, who was Premier and probably one of the most powerful and, next to Mike Harris, probably even more right-wing than Mike Harris, but none the less when it came to protecting the agricultural interests of eastern Ontario, Howard Ferguson served his region.

There's a very interesting story in fact: how Kemptville came to be Kemptville. I won't bore you with it this afternoon, but the point of my interest here is that if you are a farmer or a farm family and you are living in the Pembroke or Eganville or Killaloe or Renfrew area, Kemptville agricultural college plays an extremely important role in the education of your children and in the ongoing education of adults who are in the agricultural sector.

There is a very legitimate concern that this long tradition of a strong eastern Ontario college at Kemptville is going to be seriously impaired by this new arrangement.

The member for Nepean sits there within an urban community of 700,000 that is Ottawa-Carleton. I don't know that he understands what it is to face the tyranny of distance that farmers, particularly in the upper reaches of the Ottawa Valley, face in terms of accessing government services.

There is no doubt, by the way, what Bill 46, through AgriCorp, is going to be doing for a lot of programs that used to be delivered by real people in community ag offices. There is absolutely no question that farmers in my part of Ontario are going to be given an opportunity on a daily basis to relate to voice mail. I can just see some dairy producer in Westmeath township who's got a handful of trouble on this hands on a phone with one of these voice mail apparatuses that Mel Lastman rightly complains about. Of course, if my farmer in the Westmeath area wants to actually go and see a real person, he's probably going to be told, "Get in your car this winter morning and drive 100 kilometres" someplace, I say to the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale.

The reality is for farmers living in my part of the upper Ottawa Valley everything is a 50 to 100 mile drive. Kemptville has played an extremely important role, particularly in allowing farm kids from my area to go and get a good college program within the region, and I'm not at all confident that is going to continue.

I will give the minister the benefit of the doubt. We have a memorandum of understanding and apparently Guelph — I can just imagine —

**Mr Leo Jordan (Lanark-Renfrew):** Fearmongering, that's what it is.

**Mr Conway:** The member for Lanark-Renfrew says something about fearmongering. I want to say to my friend, and I don't want to — I know he's a colleague and I guess I had better defer to age. I just won't remind him of some of his practices and the practices of Mike Harris. It's interesting to me when I see the class of '95. I've had bad days in here and I've done some things for which an apology is owed. Somebody was here today going on about wasting time. You ought to have been here, I say to the member for Etobicoke-Humber, to have watched Mike Harris read for hours the list of rivers and streams and lakes.

**Mr Baird:** David Christopherson did it.

**Mr Conway:** Listen, Mike Harris did that.

**Mr Douglas B. Ford (Etobicoke-Humber):** That's justification.

**Mr Conway:** No, it isn't. But I guess for some of us who have been around for a while it's a little bit difficult to take a lecture about fearmongering and about wasting time from the likes of Mike Harris and company. Now back to my point.

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener):** Just because it was done before doesn't mean it should continue.

**Mr Conway:** Well, I want to say that there are some people in here who are making some pretty strong statements, who assume that some of us arrived yesterday.

I want to make the point again about Kemptville because it is important. It has been important and there is a concern on the part of my farmers that it may not continue to play the role it has played in the past.



In the time that remains there were a couple of other issues I simply wanted to touch upon. Last week we had the report of the Macdonald commission on electricity reform and there is a little reference in that very interesting set of proposals that talks about the rural rate assistance program: \$125 million approximately of assistance provided to farmers across the province to equalize to some degree their electricity cost. It's not directly in this bill, but farmers are interested to know what, in the new world order, is going to be the fate of a program like the rural rate assistance program. The minister of highways assures me that they have nothing to be worried about, and I take that as a very useful assurance and one that we will just simply tuck away.

1920

There is no doubt that electricity is an issue and the cost of electricity is something that touches the farmers I represent in a very real way. There's a significant input cost. The price increases of the last few years have been a concern. I must give credit to the government caucus. I gather that when Hydro redid its billing codes here a few months ago, Harry, there was a little bit of a dust-up, and I congratulate you for making our friend the member for Guelph understand that there seemed to be, again, some confusion at least, if not worse. I tell you, my office lit up like a Christmas tree when my farmers were saying: "What are these bills about? I thought there was a freeze for five years."

When I tried to phone the Hydro office in Perth, they told me that their lines were busier than they'd been in a while. Now it appears to have been settled, and credit — because I want to be evenhanded and fairminded — to, among others, the government caucus, because my friends at Hydro tell me that it was quite the little time in the old government caucus. I can believe that, because it certainly was in some of the quarters where I was present as well.

A final observation again about the situation in which rural Ontario finds itself. The government is engaged now in a revolutionary redesign of the service delivery from the provincial government to the province as a whole and to the rural area in particular, I say, because I see some of my colleagues from eastern Ontario here. It is interesting when you look at the local press in the county towns of eastern Ontario, at the kind of service cuts that are taking place. I mentioned the ag offices a while ago, but the minister of highways is here and the Solicitor General is here.

In fairness, my friend Runciman has taken more of the hit in Brockville than I've yet taken in Pembroke, but if you look at the Leeds county press, I can't imagine it's much fun these days being the member for South Leeds and Grenville or whatever it's called.

**Hon Bob Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** Or even being Solicitor General.

**Mr Conway:** I'm not one of the ones standing in here calling for his resignation and I would be the last person to say the Solicitor General is a stupid man. I know him to be quite the contrary. It's because I know him as well as I think I know him that I find the story that's been

advanced here in the last couple of weeks absolutely and positively incredible.

Boy, if I were in another business, I tell you — and if his story is to be believed, then there's an even bigger story than people like the member for London Centre and my colleague the member for Timiskaming are trying to develop, because if you've ever been a minister, you know that the circumstances at issue here are the ones that immediately light up the minister's office and the Premier's office and the cabinet office.

It's not the subject for Bill 46, but I say to my friend the Solicitor General, it is a truly unbelievable and incredible story, and if I was to believe what I'm told and the scandal is not the one that some people here think is the scandal, then something is misfiring to such an extent that people better start looking elsewhere in this story.

About rural Ontario, I simply want to make the final observation, and my colleague the member for St Catharines, with whom I do not always agree — it's fair to say that he and I don't always agree on some of these issues as to where you draw the line between growth and preservation. Again, one of the things about living in my part of eastern Ontario, for 140 years you've watched governments, federal and provincial, Liberal, Tory and New Democrat, develop schemes that were supposed to solve your economic problems. In fact, the farmers who came to my part of the Ottawa Valley were brought there by the old government of Canada, pre-Confederation, saying that those rock piles up near behind Eganville and Killaloe and Wilno were the best agricultural land in the Dominion. All kinds of Poles and Germans bought the government line and up over the hills they went. I'm sure that when they settled in those bug-infested pine forests and rock pastures they must have wondered.

**Mr Jordan:** They had faith.

**Mr Conway:** They had to have had faith, I say to my friend Mr Jordan, because his relatives, like mine, grew out of those rock piles.

It was government advertising that took them there and said, "Great agricultural land," and in some respects not everything has changed. The concern I have is on behalf of those rural communities I represent, and many that I drive through on a weekly basis, and there's much of north Addington and north Hastings that is a lot like north and west Renfrew.

The great difficulty that I see the government is now facing is that it is pulling back the service delivery, the face of the Ontario government in so many of these places. If you lived in Maynooth or Barry's Bay or Douglas or Cobden or Beachburg or Tweed, it was the ag office, it was the department of highways office, it was the Ministry of Natural Resources office that was the service face of the Ontario government. A lot of that service face is now being shut down.

**Mr Jordan:** It's centralized.

**Mr Conway:** Well, it's centralized. If you're in Stirling or Picton or Napanee and something you've had for decades is shut down and centralized in Kingston, I don't doubt that there are people who will manage, but you have lost something.

**Mr Jordan:** The taxes will be stabilized.



**Mr Conway:** The taxes will be stabilized? We'll see when we add up the service charges. I said someplace else recently that I have a feeling the Ontario government is going to start feeling a lot like your neighbourhood bank. Every time you turn around there's going to be a service charge for walking in the door; a service charge for smiling on Friday; a service charge for using a ballpoint pen; a service charge for asking to see the manager. Some of the old rates will be maintained; taxes won't be increased. The only problem, I say to my friend from Montague, is that my pocket will have been picked to a substantial extent and I won't know whether I've paid out \$150 or \$250 or \$350 of user charges that were not there previously. I don't know that people are going to feel nothing changed.

**Mr Jordan:** What about the constituency office?

**Mr Conway:** My friend says, "What about the constituency office?" That's the other observation I would make. I'm going to be interested to see, because there are some very fine representatives of rural Ontario in this government caucus — and one of the most revolutionary plans of the Harris doctrine is to take a meat cleaver to the legislative representation for rural Ontario. Make no mistake about it; I'm telling you —

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** And northern Ontario.

**Mr Conway:** And northern Ontario. It's going to be an interesting place in that government caucus in a few years' time when large amounts of rural Ontario lose their legislative representation, and if that plan continues — the member from Halton North shakes his head. I want to be there the day Mr Villeneuve and, God forbid, my friend Harry from Hastings and Mr Jordan and a variety of other people stand and vote their redundancy. It's not just their job; it's the relative representation of rural, small-town and northern Ontario in this place. Those concerns are out there that I think legitimately attach to Bill 46.

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**The Deputy Chair:** Questions and comments? The Chair recognizes the member for Scarborough East.

**Mr Gilchrist:** Thank you. It is Scarborough East and not, as my colleague commented, named after one of the more prominent industries in the riding, but I thank him for that recognition even if it is a year out of date. Why should that part of his comment be any less out of touch than the rest of his 29 minutes? I had no appreciation prior to his address here today that he was an expert on agricultural matters, although I had some exposure during the election campaign, going around the province, as he did, offering cabinet posts to other Liberal candidates. I guess one could say he was counting his chickens before they hatched.

It's very telling that we have comments from the official opposition about the proposed enhancements we're making to the delivery of agricultural service in this province. In 82 pages of their election document, with the exception of repealing the bill that forced the unionization of family farms under the third party, there is not one word mentioned about agriculture in their entire election platform. That shows how much they cared about agriculture in this province, one of the most important industries.

**Mr Jordan:** Oh, the red book.

**Mr Gilchrist:** The red book, the famous red book.

**Mr Jordan:** Nothing in it.

**Mr Gilchrist:** It's pretty heavy for something with nothing in it, but there's nothing of any substance.

We heard a lot of talk about possible user fees. We heard more fearmongering, that it's possible the office in Renfrew may close. For the last few months he's been saying it would close this spring; now he's saying this fall. That's not fair to the people in that community, it's not fair to the minister, who in fact has just increased the telecommunications abilities from that office. We've made a number of enhancements.

The bottom line is, we're going to be delivering the same services for less money. We're doing it more efficiently, as we are in every other ministry of the government. We are committed to the long-term growth of this important sector in our economy and we're going to do it in a business-like fashion that the farmers of this province will applaud.

**Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall):** I would like to thank my colleague from Renfrew North for his great speech. I was pleased that he mentioned Kemptville agriculture college, where I spent lots of time many years ago. I know the Kemptville agriculture college played a big role in the development of eastern Ontario and is a college that we need more than ever now if we're going to survive and get back to things the way we're used to, to add value to the food we grow.

I know another thing that the residents of our community are going to miss very much in eastern Ontario is the closing of the ag office. They had depended on that for many years and went out of their way to keep that ag office open. Commodity groups met and they were prepared to finance it, just to give them the building and leave it open, and they were turned down.

I know the farmers in that part of Ontario and all over Ontario. I got to know many of them very well. What they want is a good place to raise their families. They don't want handouts. The residents of Ontario and the farmers want to produce quality, inspected food. They depend on fresh, quality water and also fresh air. All these things are being hit very hard by the Harris government and they will not be used to the same quality that they had.

Anyway, I was glad we talked about agricultural colleges because we've got many good, smart young people who need those colleges if we're going to survive and go into the next century.

**Mr Bisson:** The member from Renfrew, as I call him, commented in his speech on the government's allegations or assertions that the opposition is fearmongering in their debates against the government and in their questions to the government during question period and used as an example — and I just heard the comments a little while ago — the whole idea of the closure of the offices. I would just say, listen, it's not a question of fearmongering, it's a question of reporting your record. If people are fearful of that record, there's not much we can do about it.

The reality is, you're the guys who are doing the cuts, you're the guys who said, "If you elect us, the Mike



Harris government" — you said in 1995 that you would not cut agricultural funding; since coming to government, a \$108-million cut. Are we fearmongering in the opposition? I would say no. I would say that is the government's record. The government said when in opposition, the Tory party: "You elect us. We're not going to close down any ag offices. All them ag offices are safe."

As the member for Renfrew pointed out, in the minister's own riding they've closed down that particular office. It was the minister himself who put the key in the door and closed it. He's right. Is it the member for Renfrew, is it the opposition that's fearmongering? I say no. It is the government's own record, and that is the point.

As the government goes on and as the government implements its program, yes, there are people who are fearful because the effects of what this government is doing affect people's daily lives. We see it in this bill, we see it in the new user fees that will be developed through AgriCorp, we see it from the reduction of meat inspectors and fruit and vegetable inspectors. People are fearful of what's going to happen. It's not the opposition that's being fearful. It is the government's agenda that is the fearful point in this debate.

**Mr Harry Danford (Hastings-Peterborough):** Just a couple of comments to the member for Renfrew North. I always look forward to his comments. He has an eloquent way of putting some pros and cons to the situation and at times that's very refreshing.

He mentioned ARDA and I was pleased to see that he felt it was a good program, because I think most of us who are familiar with rural Ontario do realize the importance that program has played over the years. But you'll have to remember, naturally, that it was instituted a number of years ago, two or three decades ago. I would also draw to the attention of the members that the last 10 years it has not been active, there have been no properties purchased and we are at a point of time when it is not serving a purpose to the agricultural community in the province.

It was mentioned earlier about the community pastures and that was a good point and that's a fair point, but I think you'll find in the legislation our intention is that it will be looked at over the course of time. While it may be in the bill that that's part of it, that particular part will not be repealed until all those matters are discussed and addressed quite frankly, so I think those things are to be addressed as well.

The other thing about AgriCorp, of course it's mentioned, it's a major portion of this bill and a very important part of it, but I think if you look back, you'll realize that all the parties that have sat in this House over the last decade or so have all introduced AgriCorp and this is very much the same. The member who sits right behind the member for Renfrew North — and I'll just use Hansard — when he was Minister of Agriculture said, and I'll quote: "The development of AgriCorp is part of this government's continuing commitment to assist Ontario farmers in meeting today's economic challenges."

Ladies and gentlemen, that's the reason it's being instituted at this point in time. We intend to implement those things that will support the agricultural community.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Renfrew North has two minutes.

**Mr Conway:** I want to simply say to my friend from Hastings, I don't want to leave the impression that I'm complaining about the windup of the Oleomargarine Act or the repeal of the ARDA Act. I just think, particularly in the case of the old margarine business, somebody ought to at least wave it goodbye and recall its past glory.

Again, the point I want to make around user fees, there's no doubt, if you talk to any farm group or any farmer, they know what's coming. They've been told. The ag offices, the field staff of the ministry, including my friends and relatives, are out there telling them: "It's coming. Get ready." I don't think it's a question of fearmongering; it's just a reality. The test will be the extent of it. But let there be no confusion. People know what's being contemplated.

I want to say, and I didn't in my —

**Mr Jordan:** It's called restructuring.

**Mr Conway:** That's right. That's the word you use. You're absolutely right, and I shouldn't — my friend from Etobicoke West has arrived and it's sort of like the Toronto Islands bill that we have now. I compare that bill we've got now with the kind of speeches that — nobody made better speeches in here in the old days of the Rae government than our friend from Etobicoke West. There's just a little gap. You win some and you lose some, and I guess the point I wanted to stress is that there have to be changes. I think the government — Mr Villeneuve — made some impossible promises. It's not lost on some of us that we have an obligation to point out what he promised and what he's delivering.

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I want to say in a very personal and pointed way, the member from Scarborough seems to know a lot of what I did during the last election campaign. Well, I didn't do the things he alleged. I, quite frankly, tragically, spent most of the last election campaign in a cancer clinic with a dying parent. I just say that for the record, so the member for Scarborough East who seems to know so very much and is so anxious to so aggressively put it on the record, knows that's where I spent most of the last 37-day campaign.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate? The Chair recognizes the member for Algoma.

**Mr Wildman:** I'm not sure exactly how to respond to my friend the member for Renfrew North in regard to his last comment, but I do respect his feelings.

I want to participate in this debate because as a representative of northern Ontario who has a very significant agricultural component in his constituency, and also someone, frankly, who grew up in the same area relatively as my friend the member for Renfrew North, in the Ottawa Valley, I have a significant connection with the agricultural community, not just in Algoma but in Ontario generally. I recognize that essentially as a primary industry, agriculture is the basis, one of the most important bases, of prosperity in this province, and governments that forget that do so at their own peril.

Even as we become more and more urbanized and we forget perhaps the history and the basis of Ontario's



development, we must recognize that without a vibrant rural community and a prosperous agricultural industry, the whole economy of this province and the society of this province is threatened.

Conservative governments in the past have understood this and recognized the significance of the agricultural sector and the rural communities of this province, and that's why I've looked with some interest at the performance of my friend from the united counties. The member for S-D-G has come to this portfolio with some significant background in the agricultural area and some commitment to the rural communities of this province. I respect the commitment that the member from Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry — what else is he representing?

**Mr Baird:** East Grenville.

**Mr Wildman:** East Grenville. I respect his commitment to the rural communities, but I think, as the member for Renfrew North indicated in his remarks, the member made some commitments which were almost impossible to keep.

As a member of a party who campaigned before June 8, he said that no cuts would affect the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. This is a member, a minister now, who is representing a government that said agriculture had been shortchanged for many years, that agriculture had not been getting its fair share, recognizing the importance of that industry in the economy of this province. He said that. Not just him, His colleagues who campaigned across the province said the same thing. They said: "Agriculture has been shortchanged. Agriculture will get its fair share under a Conservative regime."

Representing an area that is rural, with a significant dairy, beef, mutton and some egg producers, I had to deal with that —

**Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton North):** Chickens.

**Mr Wildman:** There are some chickens, but not many chickens in my area, mostly egg producers.

**Mr Chudleigh:** They're associated with eggs.

**Mr Wildman:** I've heard that.

I had to deal with that in the campaign and people said: "Your government, according to the Conservatives, hasn't recognized the importance of agriculture. Your government has not given agriculture its due. The agriculture budget, as compared to the total provincial budget, has dwindled under the NDP, under the Liberals, and we think that it should be restored." I had to deal with that in the last campaign. It was an important issue. A lot of farmers, a lot of friends of mine over the years, had to make a choice and some of them decided to vote for the Conservative candidate because the Conservative candidate said that agriculture was going to get a better deal under the Conservative Party.

Some of them also looked a little askance at the promises of all politicians, which frankly I think is a problem for our democratic system. They said, "It doesn't really make any difference who gets elected, they'll all say they're going to do a lot for agriculture but it's not going to make any difference." I think that's an unfortunate view, but that was the view of some.

So after the election campaign was completed and we saw a Conservative government elected, some of the

people who had supported the Conservatives in the election campaign said, "We're going to get our due." Those people who were somewhat sceptical said, "We'll see." So the question is, what happened?

The member for the united counties was appointed to the executive council and he has made a lot of speeches about the importance of agriculture, which I agree with, but what has it meant in terms of funding? What has it meant in terms of agricultural programs? What has it meant in terms of support for rural communities? As they say, the proof is in the pudding and the pudding has been found wanting.

In my own area, not long after the election campaign, the ag rep retired. She had served Algoma faithfully and worked for the farmers and the agriculture community faithfully for a number of years in Algoma and she retired. So I contacted the minister and I said, "Okay, are you going to appoint a new ag rep to serve the farmers in Algoma district?" I recognize that agriculture in our part of the province isn't as important, perhaps, as agriculture in southwestern Ontario or even in the clay belt of Timiskaming, but it's important in my riding. I said, "Are you going to appoint somebody?" The minister said, "We'll look into it, Bud. We'll look after this," and nothing happened.

The farmers got a little worried and then the minister had his famous tour by telephone, in which he had these talks with farmers from across the province, the electronic hookup. What he got from the farmers of Algoma was the need to re-appoint the ag rep: "We need another ag rep. We don't want to have to go to Sudbury or North Bay to get service from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. We want to have a local district office open with an ag rep who can serve the needs of the farmers of Algoma district."

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** Regardless of what it costs.

**Mr Wildman:** The member says, "Regardless of what it costs." The member, if he knew rural Ontario — I recognize he represents a somewhat urban-suburban riding — he'd know that farmers are interested in value for money and efficiency. It wasn't regardless of cost, but there's such a thing as being penny wise and pound foolish. If you have an office in Sudbury or North Bay that is supposed to service Algoma, it's going to cost a lot more, not less, because the ag rep coming out of those communities is going to have to travel a lot farther and is going to have all of those expenses and you're going to have the telephone expenses, all the mail, all of that stuff. It's going to cost more, not less.

That's why the farmers said: "It doesn't make sense. We're not going to get the service and what we do get will not" — I've got to give the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs credit. He came to me and said: "I think you've got a point. We'd better do something here." He said that there will be another ag rep appointed for Algoma district. I look forward to that. Unfortunately, I'm still looking forward to it. The minister has not yet appointed a new ag rep, but he says he will and I'm confident the minister will fulfil his commitment.

**Mr Chris Stockwell (Etobicoke West):** Bud, he said he'd appoint; he didn't say when.



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**Mr Wildman:** That's right, he didn't say when. As a matter of fact, a friend of mine who is a long-serving stalwart of the Conservative Party in my riding — his son unfortunately has gone over to Reform, but that happens in the Conservative Party — came to me and said: "The minister has said he's going to reappoint an ag rep for Algoma. When?" I had to say, as the member for Etobicoke West indicated, that the minister didn't say when. But I was confident, and I am confident, that the minister will fulfil his commitment, that he will appoint a new ag rep.

But there are a couple of other things that have happened with regard to the ministry's budget that cause me significant concern with regard to the commitment to rural communities and to the agricultural sector. Under the previous governments, and I say that in the plural, there was a program called CURB, the Clean Up Rural Beaches program, which was designed to assist farmers to limit the hazardous runoff from agricultural operations that might contaminate water sources and beaches in rural Ontario. This is not so much a problem in my area, but more often a problem in the Bruce Peninsula, southwestern Ontario and so on. This government has discontinued that program. It was a very successful, very important program that made it possible for farmers to get assistance to limit the amount of manure or pesticides and herbicides runoff that might contaminate waterways. This government discontinued it. Why, for a government that says that it's committed to rural Ontario and to the agricultural sector?

We've had a couple of other examples. When the OPSEU workers were on strike, the Chair of Management Board actually took an issue through the grievance procedure, even to court, which argued that meat inspectors were essential to assure consumers that the meat they might purchase was safe and also make it possible for beef producers to market their beef, because without the inspectors the abattoirs could not operate and they might shut down, and that would then hurt the market for the beef producers and other meat producers.

We had a situation where the Chair of Management Board and the provincial government were before the courts arguing that these positions were essential and that the OPSEU workers must be working during the strike. We had municipal leaders in the townships saying: "We're going to hire people to do this job. OPSEU might consider those kinds of workers to be scabs, but we're going to hire people to do these jobs because the farm community needs them."

What happened after the OPSEU strike was over? The minister, the member for S-D-G & East Grenville, got up and announced that he was going lay off most of these inspectors. Why on earth were they essential during a strike if they're not needed now? I guess that was then and this is now. I just don't understand it. I thought that the member — and I genuinely mean this — for S-D-G & East Grenville was committed to protecting the agricultural sector in this province. I thought he was interested in protecting the market.

**Mr Stockwell:** He's not laying them all off.

**Mr Wildman:** Oh, he's not laying them all off. I guess Mr Johnson made a mistake during the strike in saying that they were all essential; just a small minority of them actually were essential.

Now we see another situation, not just with meat inspectors, but where the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is saying that 80% of the inspectors who inspect produce are not necessary, we don't need them. The minister gets up and says what they were really doing was simply inspecting grades of produce. They were just measuring pesticides residues to advise farmers on whether or not they were using too much pesticide.

Oh, I'm glad to see the minister is joining us.

**Mr Stockwell:** Hey, that's out of order.

**Mr Wildman:** I'm sure it's in order for the minister to join us.

The minister says that they were just testing grades and the amount of residue and that this is not really essential. It was good information for the farmers, but it really wasn't necessary in terms of the health and safety of the food and assuring consumers that Ontario produce is safe, as we all know it is. He also indicated, in answering questions about this, that 96% to 98% — I think those are the percentages he used — of the inspections indicated there was no problem.

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** Well within the limits.

**Mr Wildman:** Well within the limits, as he says. I guess what that means is that as long as we're lucky enough to not run into the other 4% that are beyond the limits, we're okay, we don't need the inspection.

This is a little bit odd, particularly when we see a scare — and the minister accused us of scaremongering today — when we see that the strawberries from the United States are indeed a problem. I recognize the federal government has a role in this. Surely if we had an inspectorate that was doing its job, we could assure the consumers and that way ensure that the marketers, the producers, had a market, but instead we're laying 80% of them off, so they won't be able to provide that assurance. I think that's a problem.

Finally, I'll just say that while our government did look seriously at AgriCorp and developed legislation with regard to AgriCorp, this legislation is not the same. It is significantly different, and the intent is quite different. The intent here is to save money. It is to ensure that farmers are not getting the service they used to get without paying. It's to ensure that farmers are to get services if they get them at their own expense, not at the expense of the general taxpayers of the province. Maybe that's legitimate. Maybe that's an approach that should be taken. I don't know.

I'm concerned about areas that might be considered marginally agricultural in that kind of a scenario, areas like my own, but if that's the case, then the minister should be quite frank and say: "Look, we can't afford to provide these services any more without charging for the service. We're going to set up a corporation that is going to provide those services on a fee-for-service basis and the farmers will in fact pay those fees." If that's what the intent is, let's be frank about it.



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I say sincerely to my friend from S-D-G & East Grenville I recognize his commitment to the rural and agricultural communities. I think he knows a little bit about my own commitment in that area as well. But he represents a government, a party, that came to power promising to ensure that agriculture did not need cuts and have further cuts.

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** Cuts in programs.

**Mr Wildman:** The minister says "Cuts in programs," not necessarily dollars. I understand that's a significant difference, but I think it's unfortunate if this government is going to play upon the natural concerns of rural Ontarians to play their part in protecting the financial viability of this province and to camouflage an attempt to back off on a commitment that was made. The fact is, this party, the Conservative Party campaigned on protecting agricultural programs, on ensuring that farmers got their fair share and in fact we've seen cut after cut after cut since the government came to power.

I hope that the minister will meet his mandate. I recognize that he has a difficult row to hoe, but I hope that farmers and the rural communities of Ontario, particularly more marginal areas like my own, don't pay the price in the process of meeting a fiscal commitment that has little or nothing to do with the real needs of the farm community in Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Comments and questions? The Chair recognizes the minister from Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry and East Grenville.

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** I simply want to comment on my colleague from Algoma, who I guess will lose his position as leader of the NDP this weekend. I want to commend him for having done a good job.

I am somewhat sorry that the honourable member attempts to saddle the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs with food safety inspection. Yes, there is inspection done. It's to advise farmers. The Ministry of Health and the different health units continue on an ongoing basis to check food safety, and our Ontario farmers, as you have mentioned, sir, have a clean record, some of the best food you can produce anywhere. I've just returned from Asia and quality is what they want and that's why they're in our marketplace, to look at the food that's produced here in Ontario.

I'm amazed that the honourable member would suggest that agriculture is suffering all sorts of reductions. You know, in the budget — and I haven't heard it from anyone, but there's \$15 million there, Grow Ontario, to be spent in the agrifood sector. There is a rebate of what we estimate to be \$20 million on capital expenditures, things that farmers will be building, on construction materials. There's \$1.25 million to support a student employment program in rural Ontario. Amazing. The honourable members never touched on that. They prefer to do a bit of fearmongering and trying to blame this government for all sorts of things. But this government has been extremely positive and is sending signals out to the rural communities: "Yes, we support you. We're with you."

Now, an ag rep for Algoma: I must tell the honourable member that the job has been offered. I cannot give you

a name because the individual has not accepted. However, your Algoma office will be graced with an ag rep in the very near future. I am proud of that and I'm sure the honourable member is pleased.

**Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent):** In the approach to Bill 46 from the farm community, and other members have mentioned this in their discussions, they feel that they really have truly been left out of the loop. The government is saying, "Pass this bill." On many issues they say: "Trust us. Pass this bill, and we'll discuss what it really means for you over the summer." This has occurred over and over again.

The issue of meat inspectors was brought up just a moment ago. The reduction has been from 88 to 43, so it's not just a few. Agriculture has a long history in Ontario, and indeed the word "agriculture" is inscribed on the very front of this building. It's right up there at the very top. It's inscribed. It will be there for all time, and so should agriculture. Not only that, but it is so important to the precinct and the area around here. My office is in the Whitney, and the Whitney is named after a former politician, a Premier, and on the scroll beside his name is the fact that he worked so very, very hard for agriculture.

The agriculture community wants to be a part of the conversation on this bill. We've raised a number of issues where we feel that consultation has not existed to the fullest extent, or perhaps not at all, and we are concerned with the proliferation of user fees. When we have in the bill "any class of persons," which was not in our bill back some years ago, it gives the government a broad scope to introduce user fees; indeed one farmer told me that his opinion was that the Ministry of Agriculture could be run totally through AgriCorp.

**Mr Bisson:** I first of all want to comment that the member for Algoma, as always, brought, I thought, good points to the debate. He always represents his constituents well in making sure that the voice of the constituents of the —

**Mr Stockwell:** Forget it, Gilles. He's losing his job on Thursday. He can't move you up.

**Mr Bisson:** I saw my friend Chris Stockwell coming on that one.

The member for Algoma always represents his constituents and yet again has delivered in regard to work he was doing in working with the Minister of Agriculture in dealing with the ag rep, and I think that adds a lot of testimony to the work that Bud Wildman does for his constituency.

But I want to say, because it was raised in the debate, that Bud in his work as the interim leader of the NDP, I must say as a member of the caucus, has done an excellent job. I want to take the opportunity to say publicly in this House and publicly to the people who are watching that Bud, I'm sure, if it hadn't been for personal considerations, would have thrown his hat in the ring, and I'm sure that many a candidate, come this Saturday, would have been watching Bud give his victory speech at that convention. I think Bud not only has the respect of the people of this caucus but also has the respect of the people of our party and I would say the people within this Legislature, and I think that speaks volumes about



Bud. On that, I would like to thank the Speaker for allowing me to comment.

**Mr Stockwell:** Even the limited amount of agriculture workers and owners in the riding of the member who spoke — there are probably even fewer in Etobicoke besides a few tomato farmers, I suppose.

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale):** Food processors.

**Mr Stockwell:** Processors, that's right. They steal your campaign stakes. That's about the most you can get from there.

But I would note today we've heard quite a bit about the concerns with respect to the crops and the foods in Ontario and about their safety and whether they're safe today and inspected. I've noted, though, as I've heard this — and not being too knowledgeable with respect to this issue, I've listened to the speeches carefully — I note the Minister of Agriculture stands in his place and speaks about it and I note the member for St Catharines and even the member for Cochrane South. Having seen them, and I don't know a lot about it, but it doesn't seem to me that they have too much concern about the foods of Ontario.

**Mr Wildman:** Who?

**Mr Stockwell:** I don't think they do, because it doesn't appear that they do. It seems that they've survived and lived quite nicely and are prospering very well. They're not missing any meals. The foods that are being offered up seem to be edible and acceptable by most and it seems to me they're reasonably well fed, and I assume that they're eating mostly Ontario foods and they're eating and buying and supplying to their families mostly Ontario foods. So when they stand up and complain too loudly, I think they may be a ringing endorsement to the fine foods that we grow in Ontario.

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**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Algoma has two minutes.

**Mr Wildman:** I guess the member for Etobicoke West was commenting on my girth.

I appreciate the comments made by my colleagues. I want to say sincerely to my friend — and I mean this and he knows it — from eastern Ontario, the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, that I wish him well in his portfolio. He knows that is a sincere comment. I appreciate his comments with regard to the ag rep in our area and I look forward to the appointment.

We are concerned, all of us, about the viability of agriculture in this province. While the minister is wont to say the members of the opposition are fearmongering, he knows from his experience in opposition the role of the opposition parties. We are sincerely concerned about a commitment that was made to keep agriculture at least at the same levels, if not actually increase programs, and the apparent loss of commitment. I know the minister has a true commitment himself, but I'm wondering whether he is experiencing what unfortunately many agriculture ministers have experienced, perhaps since Mr Stewart, with regard to ensuring that agriculture gets its fair share.

I appreciate the comments made by my colleagues with regard to my being out of work. No, I am not looking for the ag rep's position in Algoma. I am not losing a

position; I am voluntarily giving it up. I will be significantly occupied over the next few years. Thank you very much.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate? The Chair recognizes the member for Algoma-Manitoulin.

**Mr Michael Brown:** I too would like to participate in this debate. It's important for members to understand that the riding of Algoma-Manitoulin has a strong tradition in agriculture on the North Shore and on Manitoulin Island itself. It's one of the strong parts of our economy. Right now, I think members would know that commodity prices, especially in beef, are not good. The community is feeling less than buoyant about its prospects in the near future because of those cattle prices. People should also know that we are significant dairy producers. That is an important part of our local economy, as it seems to withstand the vagaries of the economy better than other commodity groups.

I've represented the area for around nine years now. I had a meeting at the Manitoulin Livestock Co-op with a number of the local farmers from the Manitoulin area a couple of months ago. I don't believe — I think this is a fair statement — that over nine years I'd ever heard those very same farmers be as concerned about their future, their livelihood and their place in the economy, not only of our area but of all Ontario.

There were some particular concerns and I want to bring those forward to the minister today. I have, by way of letter and in this House on other occasions, but as he's here, I think we should take the opportunity to talk about the veterinary program, now under review, which is very significant to the districts of northern Ontario and to some of the northern counties.

The critical mass we have in those northern counties and in the northern districts makes it particularly challenging for vets. Because of that, since 1947, I believe, there has been a program through the Ministry of Agriculture that has subsidized the visits of vets. You have to understand that a veterinarian in our area may have to drive 100 kilometres to make one call. You can understand that this is not the kind of business that might be as lucrative as it may be in some of the counties where you don't have to drive quite so far to make a call.

**Mr Stockwell:** A hundred kilometres?

**Mr Michael Brown:** A hundred kilometres to make one call, yes. If you intend to go from Mindemoya to Meldrum Bay to visit a beef herd, it's at least 100 kilometres.

That's a challenge, and my farmers are very concerned about that. They are afraid that they may lose the vets who are there, that the vets will find it more prosperous and more lucrative to be in the small animal business, to look after cats and dogs rather than the large animals we find on the farms. I want the minister to understand that the farmers in that upstairs room at the Manitoulin Livestock Co-op in Gore Bay were very concerned about the existence of this program.

One of the things we all know in this business is that when times are good people don't really worry too much about government involvement. In much of Ontario the commodity prices in agriculture are pretty good right now, and therefore we're not hearing a whole lot from



those commodity groups. But the beef industry is not one of those buoyant groups.

If you start to attack the programs, like the community pastures under ARDA, if you start to attack the veterinarian programs at a time when farmers are least able to afford to look after themselves, we will be in big trouble. I am just asking the minister if he will have a look at those programs, make sure that the community pastures can remain viable for the farmers of my area and throughout the province and make sure that the veterinarian program remains in place. Then I think we're accomplishing something.

I want to also mention the issue of the dairy pooling. There were four areas in northern Ontario for dairy pools that have now been or are about to be — I guess in about a year — amalgamated into one pool for all of northern Ontario. The difficulty with this is that it came absolutely out of nowhere. Northern dairy farmers, northern processors were not aware at all that the government was considering changing this policy. In many ways, it may be the right thing to do. It may provide the consumers with the products they want; it may provide the opportunity for our dairy farmers to sell even more milk; it may provide a great number of things. On the other hand, it may just increase transportation costs across the entire pool for no good reason; it may eliminate the processors, the people who work in the small dairies of northern Ontario. For what? I guess I'm not very sure.

The member for Kenora stood in his place and asked that there be hearings across northern Ontario so that we can understand what the implications of this one large pool for northern Ontario might mean. We were quite disappointed that the minister, who really directed the board to make this decision —

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** Oh, come on.

**Mr Michael Brown:** Read the letter you sent. I don't happen to have it with me, Mr Villeneuve, but the letter really directed the result. It seems to me that this kind of public policy is not in the interest of anyone and that the least the government could have done was to go out and ask the people who are affected, go out and ask the farmers, go out and ask the processors, go out and ask the consumers and see how these —

**Mr Wildman:** What do the Farquhars think of it?

**Mr Michael Brown:** Yes, ask Farquhars, Archers in Kirkland Lake, all the dairies across northern Ontario what effect this will have on them and their employees and on the markets they serve.

The fact that the government refused to do that should tell you something, it really should tell you something. It should tell us that the government cannot defend the decision they have made. I find that, the run-and-hide approach, to be unacceptable and I think many of my constituents also do.

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I look at the bill. I see user fees. This bill is about user fees. It's about what the market will bear, it's about the kind of Darwinian survival of the fittest critical mass that this government's about, and I wonder where Algoma-Manitoulin fits into a kind of approach like that.

Algoma-Manitoulin was settled over 100 years ago. It was settled by people who came first to lumber and then

to farm. They homesteaded, they cut their homes out of the bush, they are the backbone of the economy and I only wish I could see something in Bill 46 that points to a better future for those farmers.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Comments and questions?

**Mr Wildman:** I enjoyed the comments of my friend from Algoma-Manitoulin, knowing his commitment to agriculture and the significance of agriculture on Manitoulin Island and the North Shore. I want to commend him for raising the issue with regard to the northern pool and the preservation of the northern pool in terms of dairy products. Nobody understands — and I say this sincerely to my friend from the united counties — nobody in northern Ontario understands why the marketing board and the provincial government have decided to have one pool for all of northern Ontario. It is not good for the dairy producers, for the farmers in northern Ontario and it certainly is not good for the processors and their employees.

We run the risk that most of northern Ontario's market for milk will be produced in Barrie, for instance, and that the producers in Espanola, Sudbury, Kirkland Lake, Thunder Bay —

**Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton North):** Bruce Mines.

**Mr Wildman:** Actually, there's no producer in Bruce Mines any more. That's gone, by the way — that all of these will be out of business and we'll have a consolidation. The thing I don't understand is that Beatrice Foods has said they're not in favour of this change. They're not in favour of it. I don't understand who is. The fact is that if we have to transport raw milk to southern Ontario and then transport the finished product to the consumers in the north, the dairies, the processors are not going to pay the cost of that. The farmers, the dairy producers and the consumers are going to pay the cost and it's not going to be good for agriculture or for the dairy industry in northern Ontario.

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** I am pleased to comment on my colleague the member for Algoma-Manitoulin's presentation. I think they're getting the pool mixed up with the distribution. The northern pool has been amalgamated with the southern pool at the production end of things by the Ontario Milk Marketing Board, which is now the Dairy Farmers of Ontario. As a matter of fact, I was meeting with the president of the Dairy Farmers of Ontario a half-hour ago.

You see, the distribution is what I believe you're talking about when you mention the pool; that's the production end. At the distribution end, the Farm Products Appeal Tribunal has made a decision that there would no longer be monopolies and there is lead time. I met with Archers Dairy and a number of the dairy processors and there was no run and hide, to my honourable colleague from Algoma-Manitoulin. We had 46 presentations, along with many individuals who wrote letters, so there's no run and hide.

I find it interesting. I have a letter here: "The decision has, without intent I'm sure, denied citizens of the north access to a product available south of the French River. This can only be interpreted as discrimination against those people in the north who insist to use this product.



It means changes to legislation, and I would think this should be commenced immediately."

This is written by a member of the Liberal caucus who represents a riding in the Sudbury area. The gentleman's name is Rick Bartolucci. He wants to see Ault Foods and Beatrice compete up there, and I have correspondence to that effect. I just want to tell the honourable member for Algoma-Manitoulin that we did not run and hide on this. We listened to everyone.

**Mr Bisson:** I come back to the comments that the member made in regard to the question of the Ontario Milk Marketing Board. I say directly to the minister, we as a government, under the Bob Rae government, had to deal with this. The same people who went over there to lobby you to make these changes came to us and said, "We would like to have the changes that you are now putting forward in this legislation," and we said no. Why? Because we said if you allow this to go forward, the cost is going to be that the dairy producers in northern Ontario are going to have difficulty in being able to deal with the influx of milk coming in on the market. What southern dairies will do is flood the northern market at below cost to push the dairies in northern Ontario out of that market, including the dairy producers in northern Ontario. We will stand here, I guarantee you, Minister, over the next year and a half to two years — in the end what you're going to see is a reduction in the amount of dairy producers in northern Ontario because of what you're doing in this act, and you're going to see a change in price upwards to the consumers of northern Ontario when it comes to milk.

I say it is again a case where the government has chosen sides. You have a choice in this Legislature. You can choose the side of the people or you can choose the side of big business and that's what you're doing. You're succumbing to the pressures of big business and the dairy interests of this province who wanted for a long time to open the whole issue of allowing milk to be transported into northern Ontario. Allowing that to happen is going to be to the detriment of many people in northern Ontario, both the consumers and the dairy producers, and I say it is clearly an issue where this government has chosen the side of big business and not the side of the average people in northern Ontario who are the consumers.

In regard to Mr. Bartolucci and the comments he made in favour of this, listen, the Liberals have taken double the side on this thing for a long time. At least you guys are consistent.

**Mr Hastings:** Thank you for allowing me to speak for a couple of minutes. Imagine an urban member of the government speaking about agriculture, because we're supposed to have no farmers at all in urban Ontario. But in point of fact, I have one farmer and he is very concerned about the cost of AgriCorp in terms of some of the user fees. Now you'd be saying, "What are these user fees?" He's very concerned about the cost of research dealing with user fees. But on the other hand, he also said to me — he was watching earlier today and he didn't hear one comment from any of the members opposite regarding —

**Mr Ramsay:** He watches this?

**Mr Hastings:** Yes, he watches this, can you imagine? While his grapes and other cash crops are growing.

What he is concerned about, and he didn't hear anything from members opposite, is the fate and future of honey producers in Ontario, particularly with respect to the viruses that are now invading some of the honey production cells. I'd like to hear from the opposition. One of the things we've been listening to is they acknowledge there has to be a little bit of change, but when it comes to the actual change, they don't really want any. For example, we've heard from various members, "Don't remove any of the ag reps," but they've forgotten that you can't use voice mail, because voice mail won't work; and, "We don't like telephones, because who wants to talk to somebody in Cornwall or Sudbury?" If it's 100 kilometres away, they feel as if they're out of touch when in fact most members of the agriculture community are using some of the best technology. I think it's an insult to members of the farm community that you portray them in such a low-tech light.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Algoma-Manitoulin has two minutes to wrap up.  
2030

**Mr Michael Brown:** I enjoyed the comments of my friends the member for Algoma, the minister and the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale, who just demonstrated why he's an urban member.

I wanted to speak directly to the minister. The minister reads the letter from Mr Bartolucci in Sudbury, talking about Lactantia milk; that's what he was talking about, one particular product that he thought should be available in their market that wasn't. That's what he was talking about. He wasn't talking about the distribution of milk across the entire north. That's what he was talking about; that was the issue.

What I want to talk to the minister about, and I think the other members — I forgot my friend from Cochrane South who spoke about what could happen to dairy farmers, what could happen to dairy processors. The only winners I can see here are the trucking companies that will be trucking the milk produced in northern Ontario. They will end up five years from now trucking their milk to Mississauga and then trucking it back. There will not be, in my view, a dairy left in northern Ontario. That is something this minister should consider.

Your friends, everybody over there, seems to be in the trucking industry. I understand even the minister has friends — actually relatives — who truck milk around. So it seems to me the only people who are very interested in doing business the way this minister is may be the people who want to drive Ontario's highways with tanker trucks. It certainly will not be in the interests of the consumers; it will not be in the interests of the processors. It seems to me that the minister should have had the public hearings we asked for a considerable length of time ago on this issue.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate? Does Mr Danford want to wrap up?

**Mr Danford:** The matter has been well discussed and I think that's very good for the bill. My comments will be rather short and I would leave it to you — I move second reading.



**The Deputy Speaker:** Mr Danford has moved second reading of Bill 46. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour say "aye."

All those opposed say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations):** I believe there is an agreement to postpone this vote until after routine proceedings tomorrow.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it agreed that the vote will be deferred?

**Mr Wettlaufer:** It has been deferred until orders of the day tomorrow.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** I believe the agreement, Mr Speaker, was after routine proceedings.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it agreed after routine proceedings? It is agreed.

MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1996

LOI DE 1996 MODIFIANT DES LOIS  
EN CE QUI CONCERNE  
LE MINISTÈRE DES RICHESSES NATURELLES

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 36, An Act to amend certain acts administered by the Ministry of Natural Resources / Projet de loi 36, Loi modifiant certaines lois appliquées par le ministère des Richesses naturelles.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** The last time we had the opportunity to debate this bill, I had done the opening comments, of which I've only got about two minutes left in the debate.

In short, what this bill is all about is giving powers to the Minister of Natural Resources to allow the privatization of the services in the provincial parks of the province of Ontario; yet again another opportunity, another example, where this government has clearly chosen sides. It believes the private sector does it best, that the public sector cannot do it at all, and will transfer those services of the public sector over to the private sector because supposedly they do a better job. More importantly, it means to say that what's going to happen is that I believe in the long term our provincial parks will, quite frankly, suffer as a result of this initiative.

I say again, you have an opportunity in this House on a number of occasions when you're presenting legislation to clearly demonstrate whose side you're standing on. I think this government has demonstrated in this bill, as it has in every other bill that has been introduced in this House, that the government clearly stands on the side of big business and big money with large interests and, quite frankly, does not stand on the side of the average working people of this province. I say to the government, shame. You're here to represent all of the people of the province of Ontario. You're not here just to represent a chosen few.

The result of what you're going to do is yet more transfers of power, additional powers, going to the corporate sector, the sector of the economy that already probably has far too much power at this point, at the

expense of all of the people of this province. I say in the end, we, the public, will be the losers and I guess time will tell as to how the voters feel about this particular issue. With that, Mr Speaker, I thank you very much for this time in debate.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Comments and questions?

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I wanted to congratulate my friend from Cochrane South on his four minutes. I didn't hear the rest of his speech but if it was like his four minutes, it was wonderful.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Comments and questions? The member for Cochrane South has two minutes.

**Mr Bisson:** Considering that the comment made by my leader was probably 10 seconds in length, I accept his comments graciously. I thank him very much for his comments and I wish he had been here for the first hour and 20 minutes because I'm sure he would have been much impressed by what I had to say.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Wildman:** I wanted to take this opportunity to speak to this legislation that is so important for the management of natural resources in this province, and this of course is of particular interest to my part of the province — northern Ontario.

I'm very concerned that right now — I hope members of the Legislature understand — a very good portion of northern Ontario is on fire. Unlike other serious fire situations, in this particular case, what is burning is the timber that was a major part of the allowable cut for this year. If that timber is destroyed by fire, we are going to see a situation where mills are not going to be able to have the timber they need, the fibre they need, in order to provide the product to the market they are committed to provide. That of course, means loss of jobs and a significant impact on local communities.

I recognize the difficulty the Minister of Natural Resources and the Minister of Northern Development and Mines has in this particular situation, and I mean this sincerely. The minister is not from northern Ontario. He doesn't claim to know the north that well, and he said that to me personally. He has attempted to learn about the north. He represents an eastern Ontario riding that has some characteristics that are similar to northern Ontario, a constituency that is dependent on resource management for the livelihood of many of the people who live there, but it's not northern Ontario.

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We have a minister who has presided over the gutting of the Ministry of Natural Resources. For that part of the province that I represent, particularly in small communities, the term "the ministry" has been understood to mean the Ministry of Natural Resources, and in fact the provincial government historically, particularly going back to the tenure of the former member for Kenora, the emperor of the north, Leo Bernier.

The Ministry of Natural Resources was a significant presence across our part of the province that delivered services and managed the resources on behalf of the people of Ontario, crown-owned resources that are the basis of much of the prosperity not just of northern Ontario but of the whole province.



Very few people in southern Ontario understand, I think, that 70% of the forestry jobs in Ontario are in southern Ontario, in manufacturing of lumber, paper, cardboard and all of the other ancillary products from the forest industry.

Forestry, like agriculture, is one of the primary resource industries, the basis of the prosperity of this province, and yet we have a government that claims to be concerned about the economic viability, the economic health of this province that is gutting the Ministry of Natural Resources. I never believed — it's beyond any nightmares that I might have had — that any government, Tory, Liberal or NDP, would contemplate cutting the Ministry of Natural Resources staff by 45%. This is after cuts that have taken place under previous governments.

The government continues to say it is going to do more with less. At least with the Ministry of Natural Resources everyone understands that is just plain poppycock. It is impossible for the Ministry of Natural Resources to carry out its mandate with 45% laid off.

It's important to recognize that the layoffs in the Ministry of Natural Resources don't have to do with some kind of study of what is core mandate, as the minister says. It doesn't have to do with some new analysis of the business plan of the Ministry of Natural Resources, as the minister says. It is simply predicated on the basis of an arbitrary decision by the Treasurer, the Minister of Finance and the minister responsible for Management Board that a certain number of staff in the provincial civil service will be cut.

If the government makes a decision to cut, whatever it is, 13,000 or more public sector jobs, there are only so many ministries that can be cut. A very large number of the ministries in the government are transfer agencies essentially: the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education and Training, the Ministry of Community and Social Services. A very large percentage of the budgets of those ministries are simply transferred to other agencies in the broader public sector to provide needed services for the people of Ontario.

**Mr Frank Klees (York-Mackenzie):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: With respect, I do believe that this time is set aside to debate Bill 36 and I think it would be appropriate if you directed the honourable member to in fact debate this bill. I fail to see what relevance the last five minutes have had to the subject at hand.

**The Deputy Speaker:** That is not a point of order. I see nothing wrong with the debate as performed by the member. The Chair recognizes the member for Algoma.

**Mr Wildman:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I appreciate the wisdom of your ruling.

I understand the concern of my friend the member for York-Mackenzie, the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources, but if we are going to properly debate the bill and deal with how the Minister of Natural Resources is going to deliver services in the new business approach of the government, we also have to understand whether the ministry has the staff and financial resources to carry out its mandate at all. That is what concerns me and other northerners today.

I guess the bill really deals with the issue of whether we should pay as we go. Should we in provincial parks

have more user fees? Should the provincial parks remain open? Should they be privatized? Should other services that have been provided by the Ministry of Natural Resources in the past continue to be provided or should they be curtailed or provided in another manner? These are all legitimate issues of debate.

Should we be dealing with issues around the bear hunt? How do we deal with tourism and tourism promotion in northern Ontario? These are all issues that relate to the bill, I'm sure the member would agree, but I want to say sincerely to my friend from York-Mackenzie — and I don't mean this, honestly, in a partisan sense — that I am very, very worried about whether the ministry staff will be able to deliver, no matter what the government decides is the core mandate of the ministry and what changes it is making in this bill.

As an aside, I point out that right now, as I said, a good portion of northern Ontario is on fire. We have just imported a large number of American firefighters to help us fight those fires. My constituency office has been inundated over the last three days with phone calls from MNR firefighters who have been laid off and who are sitting at home, while we bring American firefighters in to fight the fires in northern Ontario. How on earth can this government justify that? How?

We all recognize that in the past in a very serious fire situation we have imported firefighters from other jurisdictions — Alberta, BC, Quebec and the American states — and where they've had serious fire situations, we have sent our staff to help them. But we have a situation today where we have qualified, highly skilled Ontario forest firefighters who are sitting at home, laid off by this government, while we bring in people from other jurisdictions.

Initially, we laid off, what was it, 60 firefighters across northern Ontario? How many crews? I can't remember the number, but it was about 60 firefighters in northern Ontario. We imported initially 70 American firefighters. Does that make sense? Keep in mind, for those firefighters from Wisconsin and Minnesota, we pay their pay and their benefits when they come here, as we should.

**2050**

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** In American dollars too.

**Mr Wildman:** In American dollars, that's right. We've got our guys sitting at home twiddling their thumbs when they could be out fighting those fires.

The member for York-Mackenzie asks, "Why aren't you discussing the specifics in this bill?" I can discuss the specifics in this bill, but let's talk about what it means for northern Ontario. You're not going to have much of a bear hunt, whether it's in the spring or in the fall, if you burn up the forest. Why are those guys sitting at home? It doesn't make sense. You talk about common sense.

**Mr Leo Jordan (Lanark-Renfrew):** Yes, we talked about it.

**Mr Wildman:** Come on, Leo. You know a little bit about this stuff in eastern Ontario. Why are those guys sitting at home and we're bringing in guys from Minnesota and Wisconsin?

**Interjection:** What's the difference in pay?



**Mr Wildman:** The difference is that those guys are going to take their pay home and spend it at home. Our guys are sitting on welfare. Is that good for us? Is that good for our economy? Is that good for northern Ontario?

**Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington):** Just relax.

**Mr Wildman:** Sure, just relax. Don't give a damn about those guys. Don't give a damn about the fact that they could be making a contribution and they want to make a contribution. Just lay them off. Give them pink slips.

We have an enormous resource in northern Ontario, a resource that is the basis of many industries across the province. We have the potential for a significant wilderness tourism industry which is just now beginning to expand in northern Ontario. Europeans and also Americans and Japanese, but particularly Europeans — Germans, Swiss and so on — want to come to North America, want to come to Ontario to experience the wilderness. It is our responsibility to protect and preserve that wilderness for ourselves — for aesthetic reasons, for recreation reasons, because of our responsibility to fish and wildlife and to the habitat of fish and wildlife, because of our responsibility to the forestry industry — yet we lay off the very people who could help us do that.

Then when we're faced with a fire situation we import people from the US. I recognize that in serious situations we have to import people from the United States to help us, but it doesn't make sense to have Minnesota and Wisconsin firefighters in my part of the province when the guys who are local, who are located in our own area, who live and contribute to our area, are sitting at home twiddling their thumbs thanks to the fact that this government has genuflected before an altar of downsizing.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** The member for Algoma does a good job in terms of talking about the forests in northern Ontario and the situation that's going on in his riding, in my riding and actually right across the north. If anybody noted the memo put out by the Minister of Natural Resources today, we are declared an emergency area, where the forests are literally burning up.

For me to sit here and listen to a member from the government ask what the difference in pay is — I just do not believe it. Welcome to Mike Harris's Ontario, where our forest firefighters are sitting at home collecting welfare and this member has the nerve to ask, "What is the difference in pay between what our forest firefighters would be getting out there protecting our forests and what an American firefighter would be getting to take that pay back home?" I do not believe that. This just shows you the sensitivity to the north that the Mike Harris government has. To hear something like that in this House this evening — I do not believe it. And that will go on the record.

The member for Algoma speaks of the King of the North. This was the former Conservative Minister of Natural Resources, the minister who built natural resources. This was the ministry of northern Ontario. We all refer to it as "the ministry," and we know what we're talking about in northern Ontario when we talk about "the ministry." To see this government decimate that ministry, to know that it's decimating the protection of our natural

resources, our forest industry, our fish and wildlife — everything to do with natural resources is now being decimated by this government — I do not believe it. But I saw it tonight when one member on the government side asked, "What would the difference in pay be?" I cannot believe that comment.

**Mr Klees:** I'd like to respond very briefly to the member for Algoma. The member knows full well that it is tradition in this province that in the event of a state of emergency — and the member for Kenora rightly referred to the fact that we have a very serious situation in northern Ontario — for many years, as the member well knows, it has been the practice that firefighters are brought in from the United States to assist us, as we assist them when they have their concerns.

I'd like to address the kind of rhetoric the member for Kenora had the gall to address this House with when he referred to firefighters who had been laid off by this government and implied — not implied, but stated categorically — that these individuals were now at home on welfare. That is taking it one step beyond the limit of reason. The individuals who were laid off by this ministry but a few short days ago certainly are not on welfare today.

**Mr Wildman:** They are seasonal employees.

**Mr Klees:** The member for Algoma insists they are. The people in this province know that's unreasonable. The people in this government know that it's impossible for that to have happened given the kind of termination settlements these people have. I'm telling you that once again rhetoric takes over the day for members opposite. That is not what is happening in this province, and I would suggest that it behooves us all to be much more reasonable in this debate as the evening wears on.

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** Let's get the facts straight here. The member for York-Mackenzie, you just don't have the facts straight. The facts are that there's an emergency in the northwest; the facts are that there are about 200 fires burning; the facts are that they've brought in crews from the United States and other parts of the province.

The minister and the ministry are saying that all the people who've got the appropriate training are being used, have been called back. It simply isn't the case; it's absolutely not the case. I've had calls from constituents to my riding office consistently, from people who've got the exact appropriate training, who worked last year and the year before, who have taken refresher courses. I will give the name of one gentleman, Russell Travis, who actually has talked to the media in Thunder Bay simply because he was so frustrated to hear the minister and ministry say they were bringing all these people back.

The fact is that there are hundreds and thousands of people across Ontario who are prepared and willing and able to work and fight those forest fires, and for the minister and ministry to say they've brought all these people back is absolutely offensive, because it simply isn't true. I trust the minister will correct himself at some point, hopefully tomorrow when he's back, because it's simply there.

We've got a variety of people who have gone down to the fire centres and said, "I'm prepared to work," and do



you know what they've been told? They've been told, "I'm sorry, we've got cutbacks this year." They've actually been told that. They've been told that as recently as this past Friday. That's a pretty extraordinary thing to hear.

Certainly we're grateful for any help we can get in the north to fight our fires, and there is this thing called the Great Lakes forest fire compact in which you do bring in Americans, but let's understand: We pay the salaries, we pay the wages, we pay the transportation. We're spending millions of dollars to bring in people from out of province — these are just the facts — and pay for them when we have thousands of our own who are absolutely qualified to do it and should be working. I hope the minister will correct that.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** You may wonder why it would even affect St Catharines, but it's odd that in the last couple of weeks I've been dealing with one instance of an individual who wanted to get involved in the field of firefighting, finds it's a very challenging thing to do, particularly of course in the summer months when the fires occur. This individual was advised by somebody in the Ministry of Natural Resources some time ago that in order to equip himself to be a good firefighter, because it requires some considerable skill, that individual should take a course in British Columbia. There is a special school for forest firefighters in British Columbia. This person, at his own expense, went to British Columbia, took the courses, got I think 93%, and then came back to Ontario expecting that if we had a firefighting situation in Ontario where the forests were ablaze and people would be required to fight the fires, he would be one of the people who might have an opportunity at that job: (a) he was prepared to do so and is an enthusiastic person who wants to become involved in the workforce, but (b) he had also taken the time, effort and energy to become better trained and educated and equipped to do this job.

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This person, the last time I talked to the family, had not at this point in time been able to obtain employment. One of the reasons that was mentioned to him was that there had been cutbacks in the Ministry of Natural Resources and for this reason they were not employing people. It's unfortunate, though, that we can bring people from over the border, employ those people, have those dollars go across the border and be spent across the border when in fact our own people in our province who are ready, willing, eager and well equipped to work are unable to do so. I hope the minister does address that particular problem.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Algoma has two minutes to wrap up.

**Mr Wildman:** I appreciate the comments of my friends on all sides of the aisle. The member for York-Mackenzie made a valiant defence, but I don't think he has all of the facts and I hope that he will be able to get them.

Right now we have a situation where there are people who normally are on unemployment insurance over the winter and who fight fire for the Ministry of Natural Resources in the summer. They come off of UI and fight

fire. I know that many people will say, well, that's not a particularly good way of doing things, but that's been the case. If they don't get work this summer, then they do in fact go on welfare. These are seasonal employees. Some of them are very professional. You can't put anybody into a forest fire situation and have them fight fire. They have to know what they're doing. It can be a very scary experience. These people have high skills.

I know that my constituency office, and I suspect every other northern member's constituency office, is getting calls from people who have experience in fighting fire and they have called the Ministry of Natural Resources because they know there's an emergency situation and they're being told: "Sorry. We can't hire you this year. We can't take you on because the ministry has laid down guidelines on fewer staff and they're not going to be hiring people."

It is quite true that traditionally the Ministry of Natural Resources has brought people in from other jurisdictions to fight fire in emergency situations, but only after all of our staff have been occupied. We don't bring in people while people are sitting at home in Ontario who could be fighting those fires, and we shouldn't be doing it now.

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** I'm very pleased to be able to follow the member for Algoma and the other members of the House who commented on his speech because I think it brings the point home that many of the changes this government has brought, the cuts they have brought right across this province, but especially in this debate, as we centre upon the downsizing of the Ministry of Natural Resources, really epitomize some of the foolishness and in fact, when it comes to forest fires, the tragedy that these cuts are bringing to northern Ontario.

It was evident in the comments that several of the government members were making during the speech of the member for Algoma that there really isn't an understanding of the —

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** I'm assuming that you have spoken on this matter previous to tonight?

*Interjections.*

**Mr Wildman:** I'd be quite willing to give him unanimous consent.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Micalash:** In terms of referring to Bill 36, I have to say that I have a number of concerns when it comes to this bill and I think some of them have been expressed already this evening in what the member for Algoma had to say.

One of the things that I hear most often as I travel throughout northwestern Ontario is that people in northwestern Ontario are feeling that their voices are not being heard. We've just recently heard about the summit of all of the northern mayors and reeves coming together in Sudbury. I heard from a good number of those northern mayors and reeves in my riding saying why they were going to spend the \$1,000 to go to Sudbury yesterday: because they felt they were not being heard by this government. Again, I hear that, and over the nine years that I've spent in this House I don't think it's been such a great concern as it is in northern Ontario today.



We have the prime example of the firefighting situation in northwestern Ontario, in northern Ontario, the prime example of what's happening up there. We've given examples of where our own people are sitting on the sidelines. We gave the example of where these people are seasonal employees who will eventually end up on welfare when their unemployment insurance runs out. They're phoning my constituency office. They're phoning the constituency offices of the members from Thunder Bay. They're phoning the constituency office of all northern members to say, "What is this government doing?" in terms of bringing in American firefighters.

For one of the members over there to suggest there may be a pay difference — maybe the government is saving money. I really can't express my frustration at hearing that comment this evening, to hear something like that when, again, our professional firefighters are sitting on the sidelines watching this go on. I do hope the minister — and the minister wasn't in the House today; I noted that — is up there looking for a solution, because he knows the desperate situation that we are in. If we lose that forest, we're talking many, many jobs. We've talked earlier about the number of jobs that are related to forestry not only in northern Ontario, but those related to forestry across the entire province and the spinoff effects of that.

When I think of the lack of communication or the lack of response by this government to northern issues, particularly natural resources issues, I think of the parliamentary assistant as well as he travels into northern Ontario, northwestern Ontario, as he spends an evening on the American side of the Fort Frances-Rainy River area checking their restaurants compared to those in the Fort Frances area. For him to be over there, not paying particular attention to some of the concerns he may have run into that evening had he visited a local establishment on the Fort Frances side, again shows the sensitivity of this government, this minister, this parliamentary assistant, as they travel into northern Ontario and northwestern Ontario. We hear it all the time.

The Sudbury Star of January 14 recorded the parliamentary assistant —

**Mr Klees:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I think it's only right I clarify the record. I believe the impression that was left with this House, and if we check the record —

**Mr Miclash:** That's not a point of —

**Mr Klees:** It is a point of order, if you let me finish. Reference was made by the honourable member that the parliamentary assistant, in his travels, stayed in the United States. We're talking about the ministry of —

**Mr Miclash:** He's got his two minutes.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. I have recognized the member for York-Mackenzie on a point of order. I would like to be able to hear his point to know whether or not I should rule in favour of it or against it. Would you please give me your —

**Mr Bisson:** It's pretty evident what this guy is doing. He's trying to clarify the record, and it's not a point of order.

**Mr Miclash:** He's got his two minutes.

**Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** Listen and you'll see.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I'm a very patient man but I'm not accustomed to being interrupted when I'm speaking. The Chair recognizes the member for York-Mackenzie on a point of order.

**Mr Klees:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The member made reference to the parliamentary assistant —

**The Deputy Speaker:** Your point, please.

**Mr Klees:** Yes. It was not the parliamentary assistant for the Ministry of Natural Resources who was being referred to, and I believe this House was left with the impression that it was the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources. I'd like the record to be clarified.

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**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you very much. It is not a point of order.

**Mr Bisson:** Mr Speaker, I've got a point of order too. It's about a three-minute speech to talk on the member's comments. I wish you would take the rules of this House into consideration when listening to what's going on here.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Your point of order?

**Mr Bisson:** Well, you can make up —

**The Deputy Speaker:** That is not a point of order. The Chair recognizes the member for Kenora.

**Mr Miclash:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, and yes, I will correct the record on that. It was the parliamentary assistant to the minister of northern development.

Anyway, let me get back to the Sudbury Star of January 14, where this individual in question, the parliamentary assistant to northern development, said that the Conservatives had a plan and that they would have a plan. What he didn't tell the Sudbury Star at that time was that the plan included a reduction of 2,100 employees from the Ministry of Natural Resources and northern development, the downloading that would go on to municipalities, the municipalities that would become responsible for the cuts, the transfer payments in education and health care. Those were just some of the things he failed to mention during his visit to Sudbury in his interview with the Sudbury Star of January 14.

Let me go on to talk about some of the things this bill will do in terms of the closure of provincial parks. I've reviewed very closely what the ministry is doing in terms of provincial parks in the riding. It was really unique as to how we found out about the announcement. It initially came out in the plan that there would be a number of parks that would be closed in the northwest. The very following day it was really quite interesting to hear from one of the natural resources employees, a staff member, who called us up to indicate that the initial plan was there but he had three more closures that he wanted to let me know about. I asked him, "Why would the minister not include those in his initial business plan?" The employee was just at odds. He said he did not know but he was phoning to tell me, being the employee responsible for that region, that yes, the northwest would face yet another three park closures. As we know, as time has gone on, the minister has realized that mistake and realized how he's made that mistake and has done a reversal in terms



of the actual provincial park closures and is now taking a closer look at it.

I go back to my initial point. My initial point was that this minister and his parliamentary assistant are not listening to the views and to the consideration of the problems that northerners would give. When he did the reversal, he suggested that, yes, it was something they had maybe rushed into, that their business plan did not take a close enough look to what could be done in terms of these parks. Maybe a municipality would want to take over; maybe a first nation community would want to take over and take a look at what they could do. The northerners brought to his attention the actual concerns they would have in terms of the jobs that would be presented through the opening of these parks and that there had to be a better way of doing it.

So again, I must say that I look forward to the minister taking another look at parks and what he's going to do with them, whether it be privatization of the parks to ensure that they continue to be left open for the folks to use in northern Ontario or whether it be a combination of Ministry of Natural Resources and other groups looking at running the parks.

It brings me back to the point as well that people are confused when they listen to this minister get up and talk about the downsizing of his ministry, but yet he cannot tell us the actual numbers. When he was asked a question in the House, he could not come up with whether they were full-time jobs that were being lost, whether they were seasonal jobs, and what this would mean to the folks throughout northwestern Ontario.

When I take a look at communities closely associated with my riding, communities throughout the northwest, and I take a look at the Ministry of Natural Resources in those communities and what the business plan of this government will do, I think of the number of jobs that disappear out of the communities. You take a look at Dryden losing six jobs; Kenora, some 27 jobs will be removed from that community, a very small community, a community that depends a lot on government jobs, Ministry of Natural Resources jobs; Nipigon, nine jobs; Thunder Bay, 42 jobs; Red Lake, a community in my riding, another five jobs; Sioux Lookout, 11 jobs. We can go on and on; some 2,100 jobs just gone out of the Ministry of Natural Resources.

I spoke earlier about the protection of the natural resources, something that's near and dear not only to us but to the previous Minister of Natural Resources who built up what a lot of people sometimes felt was an empire, what we refer to as "the ministry," in northwestern Ontario and northern Ontario. That was the ministry that protected the fish and wildlife, protected the timber. Of course, I'm referring to the Honourable Leo Bernier. The Minister of Agriculture will remember him well. This was a Conservative minister who was from the north and had northern issues at heart. We saw him build a very effective ministry, a ministry that has been decimated by this government, whether it be northern development or natural resources — just decimated.

I remember seeing the former King of the North in the airport in Thunder Bay the evening after the budget. I remember saying to him that he must be beside himself

just to see what this government had done in terms of our northern communities, our natural resources and the folks who were employed through those ministries.

Let me go on to another aspect of Bill 36, that being what we're hearing in terms of the forestry industry. The previous speaker indicated that the government played at one point a very important role in the operation of the forestry, in ensuring that the forests of northern Ontario were protected, that they were going to be there for generations beyond. What they have in essence done is begin to turn that responsibility over to private companies. I cannot stress enough the fact that the Ministry of Natural Resources is going to have to take a close look at how it is going to keep an eye on what's happening in terms of their enforcement, what is happening out there in the resource industry.

I go back to the fact that it's not only northern Ontario that depends so much on this resource; it's the entire province. If people take a look at the dollars that are generated by the forestry industry — a lot of those forests are being burned up today — they will consider that as being just a little bit more of the entire Ontario picture. We have a government that wants to turn its back on the forests, and when it does that, it turns its back on that industry.

I go on to suggest that the minister must not only take a close look — and we've seen this government do this on many fronts — at what the bottom line is going to be. I go back to the comment made earlier this evening by a Conservative member, "What is the cost difference of bringing the Americans up to replace the Ontario forest firefighters?" It points directly to the bottom line. The minister is going to have to get a little bit more involved in terms of finding out what northern Ontario is all about. He has indicated before that he has a lot to learn. I would suggest to him that he has a lot more to learn. It's not just the bottom line that we're talking about. We're talking about jobs in the north; we're talking about protection of the things that are near and dear to us as northerners. I call upon the minister to take on that responsibility.

In closing, I would like to back up my point by reading a number of headlines from northern newspapers. The headlines pretty well indicate how folks in the north are seeing this government, how they're seeing the lack of concern it has for the people of the north and for the resource of northern Ontario.

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Let me just go on to the headline from the North Bay Nugget, which reads, "MNR to Implement User Fees to Help Operate with Less Staff."

Thunder Bay Chronicle: "121 MNR Jobs Lost Across the Northwest."

Kitchener-Waterloo Record: "More Than 900 Lose Jobs at MNR."

Thunder Bay Chronicle: "Burning Permits Now Gone" — an issue that is very important to the people throughout the northwest as they see people burning next door without a permit. Burning permits are no longer needed.

Ottawa Citizen: "Huge Natural Resources Staff Cuts Strike Hard at Eastern Ontario."



Ottawa Citizen again: "Harris Cuts Will Hit Hard in Eastern Ontario."

Sudbury Star: "The MNR Cuts Concern Lumber Manufacturers."

Just a brief outline of what the headlines are saying in terms of what this government is doing, in particular what the Ministry of Natural Resources and this minister are doing, in terms of northern Ontario.

I go back to my initial point, that I think the minister and the ministry are going to have to take a look at what they're doing and get a better grip on the issues in northern Ontario and northwestern Ontario to ensure that we have those resources for our next generation, so that we can regenerate those resources; to ensure that we have access to our provincial parks; to ensure that the folks who make use of those, the folks who depend on them, whether it be the business and the community close to the provincial park, whether it be the seasonal employee in that park, a student employee who comes back to Natural Resources on a regular basis, I think this minister and ministry are going to have to take a very close look at what this bill will do in terms of those services to us in the northwest and to the folks who must depend on them.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Ted Chudleigh):** Questions and comments?

**Mr Gravelle:** I want to compliment the member for Kenora for his, as always, articulate comments and I want to also thank him as a member since 1987. He certainly has been of great help to me in my first year.

He refers to the inability of the Minister of Northern Development and Mines somehow to understand the problems of the north, and that is indeed true. One looks at the document *A Voice for the North*, and it's become quite a cruel irony. Indeed, the minister does not seem to have any sense of what is needed in the north, does not understand what consultation means in the north.

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** Ah, you're going to hurt his feelings.

**Mr Gravelle:** Well, there is example upon example for those of you who want to hear it. When you look at the situation in Kakabeka Falls, for example, a provincial park. They've now imposed parking fees in Kakabeka Falls. Here's the Niagara of the North, one of the most wondrous places in tourist attractions in northern Ontario, and we now have parking fees being installed there, which we are very concerned about because we think it's going to simply mean there will be fewer tourists coming to northern Ontario and going to see the falls. I spoke to a constituent and apparently there were only five cars there this past weekend, so the effect is already there. The reason is because people simply can't afford it. The people who go the falls aren't able to do that.

We have these user fees being added on to pay for the tax cut — we all know the reason why it's happening — and they're hurting the attraction; this from a government that says it wants to develop a tourism strategy for the north. It just seems a bit of a farce to hear that when we see these things continually being done.

The user fees are being added on in Quetico provincial park and Sleeping Giant provincial park. We already know about seniors and people on fixed incomes who are calling out and saying: "I didn't know about the increase

in fees. I could afford to go previously, but now I can't afford to go." It's clear that this minister does not really understand this.

He's up in the north right now because there is an emergency, and I appreciate that. But it's very important for the minister to understand he needs to be there at all times. He needs to be there as a minister from northern Ontario. Unless you're from there, it's clear you simply can't understand or represent the interests of the north. I absolutely wish that he would learn to understand what the real needs of the north are.

**Mr Klees:** I'd like to very briefly reply. I'm glad to see that the member for Port Arthur does acknowledge the fact that the minister is in northern Ontario, because he does care very deeply about the circumstance. We are looking, and the ministry is doing everything it can, to address the very serious circumstances that are there.

We want to acknowledge the many men and women of the province of Ontario who are there fighting those fires now, as well as those from the United States who are assisting us and are very much part of the force that is looking after this situation.

I'd like to address, very quickly, Bill 36, which is what this debate should be about. It's really about sustainability. Reference is being made by members opposite to an industry in northern Ontario that they care very much about. What this bill does is ensure that this industry is sustainable and remains sustainable, and that's something previous governments have failed to address.

The fact of the matter is that there has been mismanagement in the past. The fact of the matter is that we believe the private sector has a very important role to play, not only in the forest industry, but in the parks as well. We believe that as a result of this bill we will have a much stronger Ontario, a much stronger northern Ontario. We look forward to working with the private sector, to working with the people in northern Ontario to ensure that the industry there is strengthened and continues to be strengthened in the years ahead.

**Mr Wildman:** I really think the member for York-Mackenzie should go up north.

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** As usual, the member for Kenora has articulated the views of people in the north and people of the northwest, in particular, extraordinarily well.

One of the worst things maybe around here is to have some kind of memory. I'm looking here at some Hansard from back in June 1994 where the minister of the time, Mr Hampton, accused the Common Sense Revolution of calling for a 20% cut in the budget of the Ministry of Natural Resources. Also, he accused the Conservative critic, who happened to be Mr Hodgson at the time, of plotting to lay off 1,000 people. I want to tell the people of Ontario that the minister of the day vastly underestimated the damage that the revolution was going to have to the people and resources of northern Ontario.

It's instructive this evening that we have debated an omnibus agriculture bill just before debating the omnibus MNR bill. The farmers of Ontario should have a look at what is happening in the management of natural resources and see the writing on the wall. The writing on the wall in natural resources is, "You pay for everything and then



we skim as much money off the top for the Treasurer's pocket as we can possibly get." That is clearly the thought and the process of the revolution as it turns its mighty way through Ontario.

If the farmers of Ontario are not nervous now, they should have a look at the omnibus bills this government is presenting in other areas. They will know it is just about fees, it is just about revenue, it is just about an attack on their livelihood.

**The Acting Speaker:** Concluding remarks from the member for Kenora.

**Mr Miclash:** I'd like to thank the member for Port Arthur, the member for York-Mackenzie and the member for Algoma-Manitoulin for their comments. The member for Port Arthur points to the real needs of the north. As well, the member for Algoma-Manitoulin suggested the member for York-Mackenzie should get up to northern Ontario and find out what they're all about.

As we add on user fees to the tourists coming into the region, as we add on user fees to the residents of northern Ontario who make use of the various facilities, the parks and other natural facilities that we have there, I think we'll find that it's going to be more and more difficult to attract these people back.

As well, the member for York-Mackenzie indicated that he would like to compliment the folks who are out there fighting the fires. I too have a lot of respect for them. I spent four summers in the Ministry of Natural Resources and quite a bit of that time on fires. I know what they're going through and I would also like to compliment them on the hard work they're doing. But what concerns me the most are the folks I worked beside for those four summers who are sitting at home right now wondering why they're sitting at home after the experience they've had; something I'm sure he will take back to his minister to take a close look at. We will certainly be providing him with names and examples if he so wishes.

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He indicates that the minister cares deeply about the ministry. We're not seeing that, with 2,100 people being laid off from the Ministry of Natural Resources, where you walk in and take a look at the attitude of the ministry and just the total demoralization of the ministry offices as you travel across northern Ontario.

The member for Algoma-Manitoulin has certainly brought up a very important point: that this government does a good number of things, and a lot of them are in the name of fees and revenues, with little concern for the jobs and the people they're affecting.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** I'd like to join my colleagues the members for Algoma-Manitoulin and Kenora and the acting leader of the New Democratic Party, the member for Algoma, to talk a bit about the current state of affairs in the old Department of Lands and Forests.

How far the mighty have fallen. It's hard to imagine that we have reached a point where the grand old lady of the Ontario government has fallen on such tough times. She is being undressed in an almost indecent fashion. The last time I checked, something like 35% to 40% of the

personnel at the ministry were going down the road. In my area, in places like Pembroke and Whitney, to name but two, a very substantial number of layoff notices have been already issued.

It is interesting, when I hear from my constituents who work at Algonquin Park, that revenues to Her Majesty are going up, understandably, because the amount of activity in and around Algonquin Park is galloping ahead, thanks to some good work that's been done over the years, some capital investments made by the provincial government over the last number of years.

I was struck the other day reading the New York Times by quite an impressive piece in the travel section of that famous American newspaper highlighting the attractions of Algonquin Provincial Park. So at the very time when some of the operations that MNR provides are experiencing some considerable growth, we are seeing a reduction in the support being provided by the provincial government.

I understand, again, the great pressure to take the revenue and try to cut your expenditures. I don't mean this as a partisan observation, as I sit here with a former chancellor on my immediate left. I just have to say that there is a temptation for any government, particularly one faced with the kind of fiscal pressures that are either presented to the current government or in fact have been created by the current government — to cut and run is a pretty attractive proposition, and worry about the downstream consequences later.

I thought the member for Algoma, the member for Kenora and my colleague the member for Algoma-Manitoulin were eloquent about the fact that substantial portions of northern Ontario are afire and we have now got a very irregular situation in terms of fire protection. The fact that it is in the outer reach of empire, the fact that it's not in more populous southern Ontario, probably explains the relatively minor attention being paid.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Conway:** Well, I have to tell you that as long as these fires are burning someplace up in northwestern Ontario, the chance of the concern is probably less than if the fire were burning in the York county forest, if such a forest exists any longer.

The parliamentary assistant, who is by all appearances a constructionist, wants a very narrow debate tonight on things like the Crown Forest Sustainability Act and the amendments we're making to it. I have to admit to a certain conflict of interest. I come from a family — not my immediate family, but I have some relatives with some interests in the crown timber reserves of this province.

**Mr Wildman:** I have heard that.

**Mr Conway:** Yes. My friend from Algoma has not only heard it, but when I was in government he asked a few questions that I'll long remember.

Growing up where I've grown up, you understand something about the political pressures around the sustainability of crown forests. I said to the dean of the House, Mr Laughren, "Do you remember, Floyd, the MacAlpine case of the early 1980s? Our sainted former colleague Jack Stokes singlehandedly undressed some



misconduct on the part of the then Department of Natural Resources.”

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** So to speak.

**Mr Conway:** Talking about sustainability, what was the story of the MacAlpine case? A very good young forester who said to Her Majesty, “There is not sufficient crown timber on this tract of crown land in northwestern Ontario to justify what those politicians want to do in Toronto.” When, of course, his advice, which was very powerful, supported as I recall by very good statistical information, was overridden and ignored and this public servant made the mistake of having a chat with a then member of the Legislature, boy, did he pay a price. I don’t know where that case ended up. I think there was finally —

**Mr Laughren:** He lost his job.

**Mr Conway:** He certainly lost his job.

**Mr Wildman:** He lost his job. He was reinstated, but then didn’t take the job.

**Mr Conway:** After a very long process. I always like to cite the MacAlpine case, and those cases have existed over the years where people have brought very significant pressures to bear on the Ontario government for cutting rights that were not in the public interest. There certainly was a case for some short-term — I think of a person in my area who used to come to me and say, “Just get me another little cut of pine and, boy, will I get the employment numbers” —

**Mr Laughren:** Over the next hill.

**Mr Conway:** Just over the next hill.

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** Were you able to get it?

**Mr Conway:** I wouldn’t get near that kind of a situation, certainly when I was in government, for the obvious reason: I didn’t want to give my friend from Algoma any more information than his fertile imagination supplied.

The history of the management of the crown timber reserves of this province is well documented. It’s given us some of the best scandals that we’ve had, and we’ve now got a situation where we are going to turn a very substantial amount of the superintendence of the public lands over to the licensees. Well, I understand —

**Mr Baird:** Your family.

**Mr Conway:** My relatives. Listen, my relatives are not saints, I’m sure.

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** Are they rich?

**Mr Conway:** Well, if you want to know about my relatives and their business dealings, you probably should talk to your colleague the member for Mississauga West. He’s had more to do with them in business than I have. Let me just leave it there. If you want to check my relatives out, you talk to your colleague the member for Mississauga West.

But I am telling you, and certainly I grew up knowing what it was to have a very political allocation —

**Mr Laughren:** Chase Manhattan?

**Mr Conway:** You got it, Pontiac. Well, Howard did the deal, the famous deal that the NDP used to talk so fondly about.

But seriously, in communities like Whitney, Chapleau, Pembroke, Bancroft and Cochrane, what’s happening to the department of natural resources is a very real and

serious concern. I heard the mayor of Cochrane on Saturday Report, that CBC roundup show, about two weeks ago, and he was making a very strong case for some change in policy, because as he was reported, if it’s not changed, there is going to be, as I remember his articulation of his case, some very serious consequence to the public interest over the next few years.

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There’s something else going on in these small towns, and I’ll speak for the ones that I know and represent, a place like Whitney where —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Conway:** My friend from Montague chuckles. There are 1,000 people living in Whitney. There are two employers. There’s the McCrae lumber company and there’s the Ontario department of natural resources. The Ontario department of natural resources has gone in as a major employer —

**Mr Jordan:** They survived very well before either came.

**Mr Conway:** Oh, I’ve got news for you. That’s not necessarily so. But let me just say to my friend from Lanark that we’ve got a situation now, and I’m not blaming the current government because all provincial governments over the last 40 years have been guilty of this. We are a major employer in that town of 1,000 people and I know the concern about welfare and about dealing with people who rely perhaps on the social safety net to too great an extent.

Let me just tell you the story about Whitney. We go in there as a major employer — that’s all of us here, the provincial government — and for decades we have developed a very good workforce for the department and they’ve worked for three or four months. Then as a matter of clear provincial public policy we transfer those folks over to the unemployment insurance roll for the other seven months.

Let me tell you what’s happening this year. Two things are happening that are really going to affect that community, and not just Whitney. There are going to be lots of other communities across northern and rural Ontario that are going to be in the same situation. The Ministry of Natural Resources is retreating substantially. There is going to be much, much more widespread contracting out and, at the same time as a lot of these long-time MNR employees are getting either a pink slip or a substantially reduced paycheque, they are also going to be told by the Dominion government that their unemployment insurance benefits are going to be reduced. The combination of those two realities —

**Mr Baird:** Who is reducing their UI?

**Mr Jordan:** Because they used it up during the winter. It is gone.

**Mr Baird:** Who is reducing it?

**Mr Conway:** The member for Nepean, who is so clever, he’s just so — boy, for a guy who’s here just 10 months —

**Mr Laughren:** One-tripper.

**Mr Conway:** What I hear about his —

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener):** Time has nothing to do with it.



**Mr Conway:** He is just so clever. I just want to say to the member for Nepean that it might just behoove him to go to some of these places like Chapleau and Whitney and Cochrane and to confront the reality — and I'm not here blaming anybody in particular. I'm just telling you I've been to meetings, and I'm sure my colleagues in other parties have experienced the same reality. So when we go into a place like Whitney, which is about 90 miles from Pembroke where the nearest community college is located, what are we going to say? We can make the speeches about workfare and about tightening the social safety net, but we have some obligations.

Let me just say something for the benefit of the current administration of the department of natural resources. It won't be crossing anybody's mind to think we have as an employer some significant adjustment responsibilities. I'll tell you why it won't be crossing their minds: because these are only seasonal people. That's true. They're permanent, seasonal people.

I should retract a bit of what I said a moment ago. I know from talking to some of the officials in the department, they recognize that something is going to have to be done for a 47-year-old father of three, living in Whitney, who's worked for the department for 30 years and is told: "It's over and, by the way, your UI benefits are going to be substantially curtailed. And, by the way, we're going to make it possible for you to engage a training grant, but, by the way, you're going to have to go from here, Toronto, to Woodstock to get the training program." I hope we understand what we're telling people.

Let me say, I accept entirely that it is a different reality, and when I look at what we have allowed to develop, in some ways I'm a bit surprised that some of those people who work at the sawmills and who work 12 months of the year have not maybe more loudly complained about some of these other arrangements, but they have developed, and the interesting thing is that governments have been both the beneficiaries and the architects because, as I say, in many of these resource towns the department of lands and forests is a big employer.

So we've now got some responsibilities, and I say to the department that there better be a recognition that there are going to have to be some adjustment policies in place for many of these people who recognize that it is a new day and there are going to have to be changes. But we have an obligation, as a provincial government, to ensure that there is an orderly transition to some new opportunity. Just closing the door, making a speech, issuing a press release and saying to hundreds of people "tough luck" isn't going to solve the problem. If one does go back into the history of some of these communities, I can tell you that there are some realities that I don't think we want to rediscover.

I want to say something else, since we're talking about the department of natural resources tonight — again, this is relatively recent but it certainly affects aspects of the omnibus bill that we're debating tonight — and that is that my sources tell me that the recent US-Canada agreement on softwood lumber is beginning to cause very real problems for Ontario. It's early days, but a lot of Ontario softwood lumber producers are becoming quite

concerned about the administrative apparatus that seems to be attached to that agreement.

I say, with the Minister of Agriculture present, that what we appear to be getting in the new arrangement is effectively a quota. It's interesting because recent bilateral and multilateral trade agreements, to which Canada is signatory, have apparently caused the farm community in this province and country to prepare for a reduction and an elimination of certain of the quota-based supply management systems. But we've now got, I understand on the basis of what I've been hearing in the last few weeks, a developing problem in Ontario with the application of the new softwood lumber agreement.

I made some efforts in recent days to find out what the nature of the problem is. I expect I might have a question for the Minister of Economic Development and/or Natural Resources soon. I realize that this is primarily the responsibility of the government of Canada, but this agreement, at least in its application, is causing some very real difficulty for a number of Ontario producers. Part of the problem appears to be the apportionment of the Canadian allocation and how that's determined, and hence the quota.

There is also apparently a dynamic now at work that will effectively put a whole tier of lumber wholesalers and truckers that are attached to those wholesalers out of business. Let me tell you, that is going to be an issue. I say to you that Ontario softwood lumber producers are going to expect that their provincial government is going to play an active and positive role in protecting provincial employment and protecting the provincial resource.

Again, just a couple of observations around the omnibus bill. Some of my colleagues have talked about the fire situation. Again, I've had some very worrisome conversations with people in the Algonquin Park district about our capacity to fight fire. My constituents, perhaps a little more pointed than I would ever be, observe that there's been a consolidation up at a place called Haliburton. I don't know how that happened, but apparently Haliburton has taken on a significance in the last year that a lot of firefighters in the Algonquin district are a little puzzled about. But there is a concern, in terms with the people with whom I spoke — and I'll be candid, some of these people are long-standing MNR firefighting types — that doesn't quite, I suppose, approximate the level of concern that we've heard from the members from northern Ontario, but a very real concern that the changes that have been announced in recent weeks are not in the best interests of good fire protection.

2150

We've got some amendments to the Game and Fish Act in Bill 36. I read Mr Power every week. I think he writes two or three times a week in the Toronto Star on fish and game matters. I want to be diplomatic, but the current minister could ask for no more positive press than Mr Power offers in his Toronto Star columns, and I sometimes worry that there is such a condemnatory tone from certain members of the Conservative Party vis-à-vis the Toronto Star that they obviously don't read the Outdoors column, the fish and game column at least, in the Toronto Star. But I have rarely seen such effusive praise being offered about the fishery of the province. So



I simply say that Mr Hodgson certainly enjoys the favour of Mr Power.

That endlessly evenhanded, non-partisan, non-special interest the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, in its evenhanded, non-political, non-partisan way, from time to time observes that the Harris government is doing not a bad job.

A final word, again, about provincial parks. There have been a number of announcements made about reductions and about closures across the province. Again, in my area the single largest provincial park is Algonquin. There is quite a lot of good news around Algonquin. The user interest is going up significantly. The capital improvements of the last few years have made it a more interesting and attractive place, apparently. I was asking my friend the former chancellor what he does for the summer, and he said he likes to go camping. I greatly admire the camping instinct in young, middle-aged and older Ontarians.

I must say that the provincial government, in terms of its parks administration, has to be careful that in its downsizing it does not eliminate from the parks service a lot of the very good men and women who have worked over the years in provincial parks. When I talk to people who come to places like the Bonnechere Park near Pembroke and ask them what it is about the facilities they most like, they are as likely as not to tell me that it is the very knowledgeable, very attentive and very accommodating men and women who have worked for the ministry, who understand the park, understand the opportunities that the park presents. There is a concern, quite frankly, that with the downsizing that's occurring these people in the main are just simply being shown the door and we are going to be providing a less customer-sensitive service in the coming years.

In fact, one of the complaints I hear about Algonquin is that there is so much interest and there's so much demand that we have not in recent years been able to develop responses that have met the requirements of a lot of people calling from Ottawa and Kingston and London. I don't know how widespread a criticism it is, but I certainly hear it from people who very much want to go there, want to spend their tourist moneys in Ontario, that you've got to make this a less bureaucratic, more customer-sensitive registration and related service.

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** That is what we are doing. We are reducing the numbers.

**Mr Conway:** What?

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** We are doing exactly what you're saying.

**Mr Conway:** The Minister of Agriculture says, "We are doing exactly what you're saying." We are going to be interested to see. The previous government had a plan for Parks Ontario, I think it was called. It really never had a chance to mature.

The point I make here is that we've got a very substantial commercial operation that is growing, certainly in my part of the province. I look at the revenue paid to Her Majesty from the crown lands and from the parks operations, and there is a very real sense that Her Majesty's provincial ministers are very anxious to take the revenue, as much of it as possible, and minimize the expenditures.

I gather the new plan is to privatize to the greatest extent possible. We've been down that route before. I will not entertain the House tonight with some privatized parks in my part of the province over the last 15 or 20 years, but suffice it to say there were a number of genuinely comedic outcomes of such a policy. I remember saying: "Hey, this is not the province any more. We are just the landlord and we've subcontracted this down to the Acme Recreation Corp of Orono, Ontario," or wherever. That didn't sit very well with somebody who had gone to a park and expected something other than, in the one case I remember, a very inebriated attendant —

**Mr Laughren:** Name names.

**Mr Conway:** I wouldn't do such a thing.

When you're the local member in a place like Renfrew, you're the court of appeal, and people want to know, "What kind of a park system are you running?"

I see by the way, Floyd, that we're going back, we're going to privatize some of the food services downstairs. God bless Joe Dineley; we're going to try it again. Listen, close it down as far as I'm concerned. But it's not that we haven't been there before. This brave new world is not a new world; it may be braver, and it may be better — it couldn't be worse than some of what we had 10 or 15 years ago — but we've been there; we have been there.

**Mr Laughren:** Same with forestry.

**Mr Conway:** That's right. When we say that Bill 36 is going to give us a leaner, cleaner operation, we are going to basically set standards and draw back and let operators decide the proper balance — let me tell you, I was talking to a senior Ministry of Natural Resources official the other day who is extremely knowledgeable. I said to this individual, "Explain to me how these sustainable forestry licences are going to work." An hour later, he had done a fabulous job. If it had just been an antiseptic policy discussion, I would have said, "You know, this is probably not bad." Then I imagined the raw politics of the various interests coming together and a much-reduced Ministry of Natural Resources. I'll tell you, the World Wrestling Federation will have nothing on this kind of a potlatch.

We will have to see what we will see. I don't wish anyone ill. I said on previous occasions that we have to look at the way we do business. There are some painful decisions that have to be made. But I say again that the department of natural resources is one of those departments that produces a very substantial amount of revenue to the province, and that revenue derives not just from the resource but from the management in the public interest of that resource.

Those very people who used to say to me, "Well, you know, just let me have one additional cut of pine," when you said to them, "But, you know, Bill, there's no pine left, and the Almighty didn't cut it" — we have to plan for the long term. We have to recognize that there is a vital public interest that supersedes the private corporate interests of people who are in the lumber business or who are in a variety of other enterprises that I could imagine. Not that they're bad people or bad interests, but they are private interests, and there is a transcendent public interest.



We got Algonquin Park because the government of the day said, "You know, there ought to be a line drawn where these lumber men cannot go and do what they are doing on lands outside of this zone." Thank God people 105 years ago had that foresight. I just hope that a Legislative Assembly 15 or 20 years from now isn't standing in its place and saying, "Who authored this misfortune, the full maturation of which was not evident in 1996 or 1999, but in 2010, we are now reaping the results of a very bad conduct on the crown lands that have, over the decades, sustained the province and provided revenues that have supported a lot of very worthwhile social and economic development programs?"

2200

**The Deputy Speaker:** Comments and questions?

**Mr Laughren:** As always, I've enjoyed the comments made by the member for Renfrew North, and in particular his reminding us of having been certain places before. I can certainly remember the whole issue of forestry, which I have an abiding interest in, and why it was that the government took back control of our forests from the private interests out there in Ontario —

**Mr Bradley:** From the lumber barons.

**Mr Laughren:** — from the lumber barons, as it were, although the member for Renfrew North might take offence at that expression. I recall that it was because they weren't doing their job in terms of regeneration. So I would simply say that there's a lot of scepticism across the province about this latest move by the government to turn these same interests back to the folks who didn't do a good job in the first place. Why do you think the government ended up taking over that responsibility in the first place? It wasn't simply because it was simply a power grab; it was because that regeneration simply was not occurring.

I wanted to mention briefly some of the layoffs in some of the various communities across the province. There are some communities in northern Ontario in which the Ministry of Natural Resources is the number one employer. They really are the central nervous system of those communities. There's one such community in my riding called Chapleau, which has a population of about 3,000, where the Ministry of Natural Resources has decided to close down its garage that fixes and maintains equipment and to contract it out to local suppliers. So I made a visit to the local office and said, "Can these people who are laid off be allowed to bid on this job?" No, no, they're forbidden for two years from doing the work they've been doing for the last 20 years, and the reason is because the local entrepreneurs might be offended. Isn't that wonderful for the people in that community?

**Mr Klees:** I'd like to first of all accept the invitation from the member for Algoma, who invited me up north. I make an assumption that he was inviting me to his retreat. In front of all the witnesses here today, I accept that invitation and I look forward to it.

To the member for Kenora, just for the record I'd like to let the member for Kenora know that I in fact lived in Kenora, just outside of Kenora in Keewatin, a beautiful spot, so I'm not at all unfamiliar with northern Ontario;

it's a beautiful place and I hope I can in fact spend much more time there.

I'd like to just make a comment with regard to Bill 36. Unfortunately, previous speakers tonight haven't said very much about Bill 36. There's been a lot of misrepresentation about the intent of this government with regard to forestry, with regard to parks Ontario. The fact of the matter is that what this bill does is allow the Ministry of Natural Resources to enter into agreements with the forest industry to provide services that the forest industry either will not or cannot deliver itself. What this bill does not do is in any way take away from the standards, and in fact it's a reaffirmation that this ministry, this government believes there should be strong standards in the forestry industry and in fact —

**Mr Laughren:** You don't know what you're talking about.

**Mr Klees:** The member says I don't know what I'm talking about. Why haven't they talked about the act tonight? Why have they not taken the details of this act and spoken to it, rather than deliver rhetoric, rather than to misrepresent what this act talks about? I think it would behoove us in the time left that we speak to the act specifically. Let's debate the act.

**Mr Laughren:** You're a born-again heathen.

**Mr Michlash:** May I also compliment the member for Renfrew North on his comments —

**Mr Klees:** Mr Speaker, a point of personal privilege: I may be new to this House, but I would ask that the member for Nickel Belt withdraw a comment that I take offensively. He referred to me, Mr Speaker, as a born-again heathen. I believe that is disrespectful to me and to any other resident of the province of Ontario who takes their religion seriously.

**Mr Laughren:** Mr Speaker, I withdraw it, because he may be a heathen who's not born again.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** I would ask the member for Nickel Belt if he would consider withdrawing the remark.

**Mr Laughren:** I did.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Unequivocally.

**Mr Laughren:** Mr Speaker, I'm having trouble taking this seriously, because all I said was that the member was a born-again heathen. If the member takes offence at that —

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Comments or questions?

**Mr Michlash:** I would just like to compliment the member for Renfrew North on his comments. As we know, he always brings a great amount of experience to the House, as does the member for Nickel Belt as well, who spoke on the issues as were brought up by the member for Renfrew North.

I think one of the important issues that the member for Renfrew North touched on was that of the softwood lumber tariffs. When he mentioned that, I think of the development of a mill in my riding. The parliamentary assistant is shaking his head. He understands the problem there. I certainly do hope that the Minister of Natural Resources, along with the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, will give that their utmost attention, to ensure that we are allowed to go ahead with that develop-



ment to make the best use of our resources in northern Ontario.

The member also refers to tourism here in Ontario. Quite often, we hear of Tourism Ontario and the importance, not only the importance in northern Ontario, but the importance in Renfrew North as the member has put forth to us. He talks about the reception our tourists expect when they come to our provincial parks, the reception they expect on behalf of the ministry that has often run those parks in the past and they look forward to that in the future. Again, it all revolves on what we will see in terms of Tourism Ontario and how those people are treated when they come into our parks and are greeted by either the private individual operating or the ministry folk.

But I guess the most important point the member indicated was the long-term viability of our industry and our forestry. I think that's the number one thing this minister and this government must keep in mind, and that is the long-term effects their decisions will have on that industry.

**Mr Bradley:** I too want to compliment the member for Renfrew North on a very moderate speech, bringing to the attention of the House many of the problems with this legislation and matters associated with this legislation.

I'm particularly pleased to see that he has reminded us that we should not be turning the province over to the lumber barons, who have an interest in making profit from cutting trees. While that is quite acceptable, while it's fine that we have an industry such as that in the province, and I understand that, I don't think you can turn over regeneration of the forests to people who are making a major profit from cutting the forests. We see too many bald forests — what do you call those? — clear-cuts in the province.

2210

As soon as you turn it over to people who have a vested interest in cutting trees, you're going to see more trees cut. That's why you must have an independent adjudicator of this, such as the government. I think the government has handled it well, and it's had input from the industry and input from those who have an interest in our forests.

In addition to this, I want to lament, as I think the member wanted to, the loss of staff for conservation authorities who had very important roles to play. I thought this bill might contain some provision for those who are involved with conservation authorities, trying to preserve, as I know the word "preserve" is in "Progressive Conservative; they want to conserve, and I would have thought they would have been supporting this.

In addition to this, I want to ensure that we have parks not only for those who are here presently but for the children and the grandchildren of those who now inhabit the province of Ontario. So please save the parks, and what you're doing with this bill will not.

**Mr Conway:** I'm interested in hearing from the member for York-Mackenzie, who says that, you know, if you look at the provisions of the bill, it intends a kind of a Rotarian picnic where — it's too bad Alan Pope's not here, because I just want people who don't know this business to go and talk to somebody like Alan Pope and

say, "Alan, what was it like in the early 1980s when the sawmillers and the big multinational pulp boys met in northern Ontario?" It was one hell of a fight, and that's the kind of clash and conflict you're going to get in this dynamic market that is played out on crown lands.

To imagine that this is going to self-regulate — give me a break. Give the poor minister a break, and the first minister, because I'll tell you, the arbitration will be done in the Premier's office. Anybody who thinks this is not significant business with all kinds of dynamic, it's got a history shot through with the worst kind of partisan, patronage politics, and anybody who knows anything about it understands that we have all made some progress in recent times.

A lot of these communities depend on sustainable forests. There is enormous pressure on any one of us who represents these communities to cut and run because it will keep the employment going for today. What about tomorrow? What about the next decade? What about the next generation? We have, and certainly good, traditional Conservatives perhaps more than any ought to recognize, a responsibility to future generations. I simply say that this kind of legislation is inadequate if it imagines that you can strip down and strip away the competence in the Ministry of Natural Resources and leave actors, some of them huge multinational corporations, to play these forces out in the crown forests in the public interest. I tell you, that's the kind of politics that I thought died with Pollyanna.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Bradley:** Not further debate; I would ask for unanimous consent of the House at this time of the evening to have the member for York-Mackenzie give his views on video lottery terminals and drinking on the golf course.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

The Honourable Chris Hodgson has moved second reading of Bill 36. Is it the wish of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members.

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations):** Mr Speaker, I believe there is a unanimous agreement to have this vote immediately after orders of the day tomorrow.

**Mr Laughren:** No, after question period.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** Before orders of the day? Okay, before orders of the day tomorrow. Before orders of the day, Mr Speaker, I believe is the agreement, and that is the case with regard to the previous vote as well.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it agreed? It is agreed.

#### EDUCATION AMENDMENT ACT, 1996

#### LOI DE 1996 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'ÉDUCATION

Mr Skarica, on behalf of Mr Snobelen, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 34, An Act to amend the Education Act / Projet de loi 34, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation.



**Mr Toni Skarica (Wentworth North):** Bill 34 addresses important issues of the present, yet also honours our commitment to the future. Its provisions are designed to achieve savings in operating expenditures for education in the amount of \$233 million, a figure that represents 1.8% of the total spending on elementary and secondary education in Ontario each year.

The people of Ontario recognize that education in our province must become more efficient, with a greater focus on resources in the classroom and excellence in student achievement. They know that Ontario can deliver the best education to students while bringing its education spending more in line with the spending levels of other provinces.

This bill has been the subject of extensive public hearings in the standing committee on social development. The committee heard from parents, taxpayers, teachers, school board officials and many other interested individuals and organizations. I would like to thank all those who made presentations to the standing committee. I would like to thank all the members on both sides of this House who participated in the hearings.

As a result of the presentations and the hearings, the government did listen, and a number of amendments were made to the bill. For example, section 9 of the bill has been amended substantially. The intent of this section is to enable negative-grant boards to contribute their fair share to our savings strategy. The amendments we have proposed make clear that these boards can make their contribution by other means than a direct payment to the finance minister. Further, the section now includes a sunset clause which stipulates it will no longer be in effect after December 31, 1998. These changes address the concerns that the payment would not be used for educational purposes and give boards more flexibility to determine the type of contribution they will make.

We heard loud and clear from all parties involved, from all presenters, the dramatic need for finance reform in education. This bill is but one step, the first step, towards education finance reform and thus towards a better education system that meets the needs of the people it serves: the children in our schools and the taxpayers of Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Comments or questions?

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Although the government has made these changes to the bill, as the education critic for the Liberal Party, Mr Patten, will indicate, it certainly has not rectified the major problems with this bill.

What in effect it does is begin the destruction of the education system in this province as we have known it over the years and as it was first constructed by Premier Robarts, under the Robarts plan, Premier Davis and subsequent ministers of education.

We are seeing in this province, despite all promises made to the contrary by the Conservative Party, classroom education being adversely affected. We are seeing hundreds, perhaps thousands, of teachers across the province who are being fired from their jobs. People who assist them, particularly now that we have disabled individuals who are integrated into the so-called regular

classroom, those aides to the teachers and to those in the school are being lost, as well as those who are additional workers in the education system.

I have parents who come to me and say, "We've lost junior kindergarten," an excellent start for children. It makes a big difference. The Minister of Correctional Services is trying to deal with problems with offenders of all ages in the correctional system, and one of the ways to help them out is to have junior kindergarten, to get people started on the right path in the first place. Objective studies have clearly demonstrated there's a substantial difference in those students who have had the opportunity to have junior kindergarten and those who have not. All you have to do is ask the people who are in the classroom, on the front line, many with years of experience who have worked with these very young children, how they can make a difference in their lives and how society does not have to keep paying the price for neglect of those children. This bill does not address that problem; in fact it makes it worse.

2220

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I want to compliment my friend from Wentworth North on his presentation and I recognize that he took significant and sincere interest in the presentations made before the committee by many interested groups. But the bottom line is that at the end of the process, other than a couple of minor amendments such as a sunset clause for the removal of funds from Metropolitan Toronto and the city of Ottawa, the basic changes were not made.

We had a situation where we had presenter after presenter after presenter — parents, teachers, trustees, interested parties — saying that you can't take \$400 million out of the education system all at once, annualized to be worth \$1 billion, and not affect adversely the classroom. The fact is, the classroom is being adversely affected. We're seeing many boards removing or getting rid of junior kindergarten, those that are keeping them changing those programs substantially, and we've seen adult students being forced into continuing education when they could be involved in a program that would enable them to get back into the workforce or to enter into post-secondary education.

So while I appreciate the comments of my friend from Wentworth North and his sincere concern about the positions taken by many who presented before the committee, the fact is that the changes they were requesting, in the majority, have not been made and we still see the bill presented to us for third reading which will have significant adverse effect on classroom education.

**Mr Chris Stockwell (Etobicoke West):** I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate the member for Wentworth North as well. I know, as a member of the government caucus, the work and effort and hours that he spent in committee working on this particular bill. Certainly the questions he answered in caucus were well researched, and I will tip my hat to the effort and the work that he put into this. I think he should be recognized for that.

Further, I think we should just set a couple of things straight. The NDP started the process of negative funding. It was under the social contract that they started that



program. Their position was very similar to the one offered by the government today. There was a sunset on theirs as well, which was the termination of the social contract. That government never saw the end of the social contract because they were removed from office before it terminated. So this is not a new issue that was started by this government. It was originally established by the NDP under the guise of the social contract where they in fact drafted money from Metropolitan Toronto and used it to disperse about the province with respect to education funding.

As far as junior kindergarten is concerned, this has not been a long-established program. The members opposite talk as if junior kindergarten has been established as a mandatory program —

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** Twenty-five years.

**Mr Stockwell:** I hear the cackling from the member for Ottawa.

As a mandatory program, this was to kick in in the fall of 1994. I say to the member for Ottawa, who was cackling a moment ago, that was when it became mandatory. Let's be clear. There has been generation upon generation of students educated in this province over the years, well educated without junior kindergarten. They've been educated at the highest levels and performed at the highest levels. We have seen a clear deterioration over the last year —

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** Did you attend?

**Mr Stockwell:** — again, Mr Speaker, I'm trying to finish — we've seen a deterioration of our education system to the point where they on the opposite side are defending the status quo. I don't find a lot of my constituents suggesting education and the status quo is the way to go in 1996.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Wentworth North has two minutes to wrap up.

**Mr Skarica:** All I was going to say basically was that given the nice things that were said to me by the leader of the third party and by the member for Etobicoke West, I think I'll quit while I'm ahead and say nothing.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Patten:** I know the hour is late and many members, especially on the government side, are anxious to see people wind up their speeches. But this bill, I believe, is the most significant educational bill that we have seen and that we may see from this particular government and has the greatest impact on their educational system and it's important that I address the issues of this particular bill.

I have heard carefully the comments of the parliamentary assistant from Wentworth North. I too, as the member for Algoma said, believe that as a member he had some empathy with a lot of presentations that were made. Unfortunately he was not in a position to deliver because of course he was not the decision-maker. In the final analysis not very much changed from the times in which we went around the province and we visited numerous communities from Windsor to Ottawa to Thunder Bay and to Sault Ste Marie and we had some very thoughtful, extremely thoughtful, passionate, concerned, well-read, well-written, thoughtful presentations.

They had an impact, I know, but the end result was that it became clear, as we see the end result today, that economics really prevailed, that behind these cuts we're not talking about the enhancement of education; we're talking about trying to do less or having less in order to do less, because that's what this bill really is all about.

The minister says that Bill 34 is necessary, it's fair and it's reasonable. I of course must truly disagree. The cuts aren't necessary and they do not serve education. They have been implemented, as we all know, to feed the tax break. This is a money bill. It does nothing for the quality of education, in my opinion. Indeed it hurts it.

The cuts are not even fair. They penalize boards which have been frugal and have already reduced administrative spending drastically over the past five years. The cuts are not reasonable. What's reasonable about reducing accessibility, because that's what has happened.

Many of you will recall that almost every time he spoke the minister talked about accessibility, affordability and accountability. You will note of late he is not using the term "accessibility" very often. He sits right beside the Minister of Transportation, who is trying to make access for people throughout this great province by way of roadways. I know that the Minister of Transportation will hear his colleague seldom use that term any more, "accessibility" meaning that you can have access to all the programs that are available. They indeed will be less.

Bill 34 was to be the result of a toolkit. A toolkit denotes the concept of fixing something. Bill 34, in my opinion, is the dismantling of many of our educational programs. It opens windows of opportunity for the government to reach in and to pull out money totally from education. I repeat that the money being saved is being removed totally from the education portfolio. So when I hear comments of members saying this will enhance quality, it does not. It is being required by the Treasurer, Mr Eves, who needs X amount of dollars to address the deficit and in order to provide a tax rebate. That's why money is leaving education. It's leaving it totally.

I've already talked at length about the cuts during the early debates, but I want to take my time to talk about some of the things that we heard during the hearings into Bill 34 and what the government did not really listen to.

**2230**

First of all, I want to once again speak to the issue of what I believe truly is an abuse of facts and figures that continue to be issued from the government and by many of its members, and especially from the Minister of Education and Training's office. The minister continues to talk about overspending on education. He also says his education cuts are aimed at reducing administration, administrative waste, but Bill 34 tells us another story. As is often the case, what is said does not fit the words or the deeds.

Of the \$400 million that is being cut from education this year alone, \$231 million is supposedly directed at administrative cuts, but the cuts are not aimed at administration at all. In fact, \$115 million of the \$231 million comes from changes in funding for junior kindergarten and for adult education. That is fully 50% of the so-called administrative funding cuts.



The government has not provided school boards with the flexibility they were looking for to find administrative savings. They indeed were prepared to enter into doing so. What did they do? The government targeted program areas and because of that, I believe, got itself painted into a corner.

But what is more insidious is if you look at the annualized cuts to junior kindergarten and to adult education. The 1997 budget year cuts to these two programs will amount to almost \$300 million alone. The total impact of this round of cuts will reach more than \$800 million, as the minister has already acknowledged. But the government doesn't tell you about the cuts to junior education. It wasn't mentioned either in the campaign brochures. It was mentioned simply that there would be a return to a local option. It did not say there would be a cut in funding of 50%.

Instead, they continue to play fast and loose with numbers. The myth-making about overspending and waste in our educational system also continues. It was just mentioned by the parliamentary assistant. According to the Minister of Education and Training, we have spent \$1.3 billion more than the average of the other provinces. I say to you, especially to my colleagues on the government side, this is not true. The parliamentary assistant knows it's not true, the minister's staff knows it's not true, and the minister himself knows it's not true.

Within their calculations, for example, Ontario is not included in the average and the cost of junior kindergarten is included in the total spending side, but the 100,000 junior kindergarten students are not counted in the per pupil figures. In spite of acknowledgements from the minister and the deputy minister during estimates last fall that these figures were not accurate comparisons, why do they still continue to use these figures?

If I say something and someone comes to me and says, "You know, Richard, what you're saying is not correct, it's not true, it really is wrong," and if it was verified, I would say, "All right," I would not say that again. I truly find it strange that after the minister truly acknowledged that these figures were not correct, he would continue, and his office would continue, to perpetuate this absolute myth that indeed Ontario is overspending.

What are the facts? Using the most up-to-date information from StatsCan data, as well as that from the Ministry of Education and Training, one finds that Ontario in 1995 spent about \$227 per pupil more than the average of the other provinces. That's what was stated. However, at that time we were spending 42% of the Canadian dollars on 41% of the number of Canadian students, which is a pretty close ratio to educational spending. But in 1996-97, after factoring in the grant cuts, Ontario will spend about \$27 above the average of the other provinces, not including Ontario in that average. But by the 1997-98 year, when the full impact of these cuts takes hold, Ontario will be spending \$85 less per pupil than the average of the other provinces. We will be below the average. Is that what we should be striving for, submediocrity? Is this the government's notion of equity? Instead of bringing people up to high standards, it seems they are bring people down to subaverage standards.

I also want to touch on the question of classroom and non-classroom expenses as they relate to the Sweeney report. This is another myth-making area of the government, or at least of the ministry or the Minister of Education. The definitions and categories used in the Sweeney report for splitting up spending came from the Ministry of Education and Training. They are the government's figures; they were not done by Sweeney. He says this in his report, so don't try to say the Sweeney report backs up what the government is saying.

The other myth is that the Sweeney task force was commissioned to recommend how the number of boards could be reduced by half. It does recommend that school boards be reduced by half. That is what the ministry wanted it to do. The report simply said, "If you want to have this reduction, this is what you will have to do." So again, it should not be attempted to utilize this impartial support for actions, because it's not there. That was the mandate for the school board reduction task force.

The breakdown of spending into classroom and non-classroom is not playing straight. You can't have a classroom education without many of the non-classroom expenses. In fact, actual administration accounts for only 16%. You'll notice that the term is used interchangeably — classroom expense; non-classroom — but to imply that non-classroom means administration — it doesn't.

Dianne Dalton, education director with the Victoria County Board of Education, highlights the issue here when she says, and I quote: "The plan to streamline expenses by targeting non-classroom costs requires a more specific definition of what those costs include. Costs like heating and transportation in rural communities are not perks."

The government is prepared to go to any lengths, it seems to me, to reach its goal of reducing education spending. It has to, because it has to find the money, again, for the tax break, resulting, though, in pitting people against each other, and that's the unfortunate part. We saw this during the hearings in various communities. Bill 34 continues this kind of divisiveness and some of the divisiveness that had begun with Bill 26. It plays on people's emotions, pitting board against board, English against French, Catholic versus public; it pits parents against teachers and program against program. It is an unhealthy attack on our educational system and it is breeding intolerance and bitterness.

It is not only parents, teachers, taxpayers and the community at large who are concerned about the education of our children; it is also the students themselves. Students have demonstrated across the province, all the way from Dryden to Ottawa to Hamilton. It need not be this way. I believe it should not be this way and it was not supposed to be this way.

According to their election documents, the present government, the Conservative Party, felt that \$400 million could be saved by streamlining administrative spending. That may be so, but surely over time. And what of \$400 million? Where would that \$400 million go? Of course, as you well know, I believe that any savings that might or could be found — and I believe could be found — in administrative savings should go right back to improve



the quality of education in the classroom, to help the teacher be the very best trained possible, to help the teacher with the latest technologies that are available for increasing and improving education and independent learning as a goal.

This, however, was not the plan for the money. No, they need the money so, as you know, they can give a tax rebate of 30%, the tradeoff being fewer services in return for more disposable income and, ironically, more disposable income for people to pay for user fees for the same service or not have that service at all. The problem with this is that those who need the service the most benefit the least and those who will benefit from the tax cut need the tax cut the least.

2240

Who benefits from the tax cut? According to Revenue Canada, Ontarians earning \$100,000 and up will receive more than \$1.3 billion in tax rebates. It's almost the same figure the Minister of Education continues to talk about. Isn't that interesting? Ontarians earning \$250,000 and up will receive more than \$446 million in tax rebates from the government. The \$1 billion that will eventually come out of education will equal a tax rebate for approximately the top 3% of income earners in Ontario. That is absolutely incredible.

Who doesn't benefit? Let's start at the beginning, because we know that thousands and thousands of children who would otherwise have been entering junior kindergarten in September 1996 are not benefiting. They are not benefiting now, nor will they benefit later when they find themselves in overcrowded classrooms where the teacher is unable, no matter how dedicated, to provide that essential, individual, one-on-one personal contact, personal instruction, personal teaching.

Nor are adult students benefiting. In their case, they're not benefiting for two reasons: first, because the program funding for their needs has been cut; second, they most likely receive a low income in the first instance, the reason for which they're returning to high school to complete their diploma, and therefore get little or no tax rebate at all.

The teachers who are laid off due to the severe cut-backs will not benefit because they will not be paying any income tax in the first place.

How about the construction trades, which would otherwise have been building new schools across the province to meet increased enrolments and overcrowding? We sure know that the Peel county board is suffering tremendously with the capital freeze. There's no work for construction workers and there are no schools for kids, a lot more portables and increases in class size. Those parents are not too happy. I had a chance of visiting many of them a few weeks back, and they are highly discouraged. Tell me these cuts do not impact upon children in the classroom.

How about the property taxpayers in Metro Toronto and Ottawa — and the parliamentary assistant spoke of this — who, due to the minister's education cut in this bill, will be paying for a tax cut a second time, they say, when the Minister of Education comes looking for what's called an equalization payment to the Minister of Finance from their local education property tax.

The fact of the matter is that there is no silver lining attached to these education cuts. They signal storm clouds for education in Ontario. We have not seen the impact of this.

Bill 34 does not reflect at all the input we received from various presenters during hearings on the legislation. During clause-by-clause analysis on Bill 34, the Liberal caucus moved a series of amendments, measures that would have allowed school boards to reduce spending without impacting on the quality of education in the classroom. We proposed amendments to set up per-student expenditure tables that would provide boards with spending ceilings. This would have the effect of recognizing reductions that have already been made by certain school boards. It would also identify administrative spending and allow for targeted reductions to those areas only.

Another amendment was to have early childhood educators work with certified teachers in the junior kindergarten classes. This would have addressed quality issues. Junior kindergarten is an equalizer, as we all know, for less-advantaged children. It would save numerous JK programs. There was the reduction of the number of school trustees and capping salaries of trustees at a maximum level of \$20,000 a year etc.

These measures were some real tools that would help school boards to streamline operations while maintaining and improving the quality of education in Ontario. Although I think the presentations and our caucus amendments to Bill 34 made an impact on the government members of the committee, the majority of government members chose, I think against their better judgement, to vote against the amendments.

I would, however, like to express my gratitude to the Conservative member for Brant-Haldimand who, true to his convictions and principles, supported our amendment to bring a mix of early childhood educators and certified teachers into the junior kindergarten program. This, I am certain, would have eased the stress for many boards in dealing with what is for them a dollar-and-cents issue rather than a pedagogical one and an ability to save the program — in some instances, the only way to save the program.

The official government response to the amendments was quite curious. The amendments were considered to be premature at this point. I received and I acknowledged with a degree of sensitivity the parliamentary assistant saying, "Those amendments you're proposing are very good, but they're premature because they preclude changes in education finance and governance reforms that the government intends to bring forward in the future." Fine. If that's the case, then Bill 34 in its entirety may be premature. The unequal impacts of these cuts should therefore await finance reform.

This government has had little idea of the impact of these cuts on education. I would not say it was intended; I don't believe that is the motivation at all. But there were no impact studies. It's hard to get a straight answer as to how they came up with the supposed savings from cuts to junior kindergarten and adult education. How many students are involved? How many programs would be lost as a result? In spite of the fact that the minister



tries to argue that these cuts represent only 2% to 3% of school board budgets, we all know that he had to come back to the House with an emergency fund to repair the damage the cuts were having on many small school boards. They were having a devastating impact on these school boards. In some cases, over 50% of their revenues would be lost because they were highly subsidized by grants from the ministry. But instead of accepting the responsibility for the damage and anxiety caused, the minister passed off the blame to the ministry itself. The minister has failed to properly manage education in this province, in my opinion.

The cuts to education are immediate. Bill 34 was supposed to be part of a toolkit to help boards make cuts. These amendments would have helped boards to direct cuts away from the classroom and away from their programs in the immediate term. But Bill 34 doesn't reflect it because those who are responsible for the legislation, those who could authorize changes if they so wished, were not present for the debate at clause-by-clause. They were not part of the hearings. They weren't there to hear the testimony of parents and teachers and taxpayers and, most importantly, a number of students. They did not make changes, because the cuts were exactly as they wanted them, targeted primarily at junior kindergarten and adult education.

It is clear, however, that all the government seems to be interested in is getting a hold of the money and, I repeat, getting the money out of education. It's not an interest in streamlining for the benefit of the quality of the educational system at all. The cuts are driven by economics, not by education.

Now let's look a little bit at what we heard during the hearings. I'd like to give a few examples of some of the testimony. We heard from presenter after presenter about the value of junior kindergarten. We heard from education experts in early childhood education. We heard from teachers. We heard from principals. We even heard from junior kindergarten students. These presentations come to mind: those of Dr Susanne Eden, Dr Paul Steinhauer and Carolyn Morrow. All three provided, among others, excellent firsthand insight into the role of junior kindergarten. On a personal basis I found it insightful. I learned a great deal from their presentations and I believe the members of the committee did as well. It was very impressive, the information that had not been accessed by the minister for his review of junior kindergarten, some of the studies that were referred to, so we suggested that those studies be passed on to the minister's office.

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Dr Paul Steinhauer, world-renowned chief child psychologist with Sick Kids here in Toronto, working for a number of other projects and organizations in the interest of child development, made a significant observation which I think is relevant to this situation. This man, who will take out the time to come and share his views, also made representation at our hearings in the social development committee today. I quote him here:

"I would think that one of the saddest things about the way things are done by governments...is the fact that often practised wisdom from the people who are on the front lines doesn't get through, that government research

is usually done by people in the government who have an axe to grind."

That is why I don't give much credence to the minister's own internal review that he has talked about on several occasions. I wonder if it even exists and, given his track record, I'm certain that his review, oddly enough, will come about with the same conclusions he had already formed before.

Something I have learned over my term as education critic of the Liberal Party is the fundamental role of early childhood education to the future success of children. The presentation from Mrs Carolyn Morrow was very poignant. It was a snapshot of junior kindergarten from a parent's point of view. This is what she had to say:

"Obviously, then, the primary reasons to maintain the junior kindergarten program are the socialization and education of young children. However, there are fiscal benefits that accrue directly to the community. By the time the last participants of the Perry Preschool Project researched reached the age of 19 in 1984, the cost-benefit ratio of the preschool program was one to seven: For every \$1 invested in the program, \$7 were returned to the community.

"On the cost-cutting side, decreased social expenditures resulted from the following, and I list them in descending order of fiscal savings: reduced welfare and other social assistance payments; reduced special education costs; reduced crime costs to victims and the criminal justice system.

"On the revenue side, income to the community came from taxes paid on employment income. This income is cumulative as lifetime earnings rise. In short, public early childhood education programs such as junior kindergarten serve taxpayers' self-interest by reducing the consumption costs of other social services, and benefit the community as a whole."

Who should pay for junior kindergarten? Education in today's society is an interministerial function and by its nature is required to be so. There is a potential for educated students and the educational institutions themselves to provide benefits to every social and economic sector, but it is just this pervasiveness that often clouds the issue of funding responsibilities for junior kindergarten.

If funding for junior kindergarten will not be provided by the Ministry of Education, then by whom? Who can offer it at no cost to parents so that it is universally accessible? That becomes the question. The fact is that nursery schools or other private preschool programs are accessible only to those who can afford them, only to those who have the means and only to those who have the physical or geographical proximity to access them.

The government trumpets that many boards have not cut junior kindergarten. I acknowledge that's true; however, many have. This isn't fooling anyone because it doesn't stop here. Next year we'll see the continuation of these program terminations.

I turn to the presentation of Emily Noble of the Sault Ste Marie Women Teachers' Federation, who said: "In terms of the cuts to junior kindergarten, boards have some really, really tough decisions next year and the year



after. The money will not be there. The government has said so."

Dr Eden agreed, saying: "...it really does come down to dollars and cents. I find it hard to know how we could equate attempting to develop quality education in this province with decimating one of the programs that has been so very successful, one of the programs for which there is a need and which can make a difference all the way through the child's academic and social development."

This is rounded out by a quote from Hillary Clinton, the wife of the US President, who once said: "Bear this research in mind when you listen to those who argue that our nation cannot afford to implement comprehensive early childhood education programs for disadvantaged children and for their families. If we as a village decide not to help families develop their children's brains, then at least let us admit that we are acting not on the evidence but according to a different agenda."

I believe this is the heart of the discussion. I say to the minister, be truthful about what you are doing. Admit that you've gone beyond making the program solely a local option, that you have reduced the funding and as a result junior kindergarten is being squeezed out of existence in many boards in many parts of this province. The ministry's projections on savings by way of the funding changes to junior kindergarten is actually based on school boards cancelling the program. Does that illustrate a commitment to the program? If that isn't a hidden agenda, I'm not sure what is.

What is at stake? Dr Steinhauer put the issue in perspective when he said: "I suggest to you, ladies and gentlemen, that there's no better investment for a society in either economic or human terms than a good investment in supporting children to achieve their developmental potential. If they make it to become healthy, competent and productive citizens, then we all benefit and the province benefits. If they don't make it, then we will all pay for higher care costs, higher mental health costs, higher remedial education costs, higher crime control costs, higher costs of social assistance and a lower quality of civic life."

It has become more and more clear to me in recent days that this government does not support junior kindergarten. We found out just a few weeks ago that the Minister of Education and Training is directing isolated school boards which wish to continue junior kindergarten to raise their property tax by 5% to pay for the program. Even if isolated boards are able to fund the junior kindergarten program within existing resources, they still are mandated and forced to raise property tax by 5%.

The minister has given them an option: Either kill junior kindergarten or raise taxes by 5%. I thought the government wanted to see changes without any rises at all in taxes. Is this some kind of unique brand of common sense? I'm sure you will agree it is not. I don't think this is what people had in mind when they heard the term "local option."

In a letter to the Minister of Education and Training, Paulette Gagné says, and this is from the school boards affected in the north: "The argument, Mr Minister, is that this is not fair to the school boards or the taxpayers. We

are asking you, Mr Minister, to remove the imposed 5% local education tax increase to isolate boards who choose to offer junior kindergarten." She goes on to say in the letter: "This is now our fourth letter on the subject and we are still waiting for a response. For your information, there is an education system outside of Metro Toronto."

Ms Gagné has not heard from the minister, yet has received a memo dictating to that board that they must increase the mill rate to their taxpayers by 5% and that the board will remove that amount of money from their particular legislative grant.

2300

The government cuts, it seems to me, are not wise. Some people would say they're stupid. We can be concerned about the economic situation of the province, but we must also be aware of the social impact and the social context. We will fail both economically and socially if we engage in a pattern of cuts where we do not know what the consequences are later.

The same can be said for what is happening in the area of adult education, opportunities for those returning to complete their high school education. The government is simply cutting without producing any studies on impact or any solutions.

There was considerable concern expressed by individuals and educators over the decline in the grant for those 21 years of age and over. Many people feel that the government is once again moving ahead before it actually knows the impact of what will take place.

Contrary to the minister's assertion at the beginning of the hearings on Bill 34, there are no provisions in this legislation to meet the specific needs of adult pupils. The work group on education finance was at least progressive in their thinking in this area by looking at various models for delivering adult education programming. They saw and recognized that one size does not fit all and that you can't meet specific needs with a bare-bone, per pupil allotment.

The government has offered nothing and they know it. They have only taken away. The minister can talk about flexibility but again this is a matter that comes down to dollars and cents.

Bill Conrod from Algonquin College summed up what is at stake in the changes to adult education funding, and he says: "It's strictly a capacity and a financial matter for a group of people who we know do not have the additional cash to participate."

When the minister talks about changes to the delivery of adult education he argues that we have to stop treating these adults like children. But what about treating these adults like students? Let's talk positively instead of using negative images. The minister says the approach is an insult to adult learners. The minister's attitude is an insult to the students and to the adult educators. He has shown no understanding of this group's profile or the adult education student himself or herself.

During estimates the minister alluded to differences between adolescents and adults in terms of costs of instruction. At that time we did not receive a description of the difference and we still haven't. But that's fine because during the hearings we heard directly from adult students who painted a picture for us. Most adult students



have had difficulties in high school and they still have these learning difficulties or problems when they return to complete their diploma. They talked about their special needs, the type of environment that works best for them, the type of instruction that works best for them, some of the learning skills they need, and some of the barriers.

Many adult educators talked about the experiences assisting adult learners with literacy and upgrading and vocational retraining. They know only too well the impact that a negative self-image has on individual perceptions of competence and perceived ability to learn. A negative self-image can be dispelled, however, when we can help adults deal with the barriers they encounter, barriers related to attitudes, related to values and self-perceptions, about one's ability to learn.

Probably one of the most important observations we came across in many of the presentations was that the continuing education model versus the adult education model doesn't fit the needs of most adult students seeking to complete their high school diploma.

We heard from Wanda Gould here in Toronto who had returned to high school. She had gone through continuing education programs. She dropped out again. She's now finally succeeding in an adult education program. This is what she had to say: "I'm finally learning how to learn on my own and to discipline myself to learn on my own. That's what continuing education did not provide me."

Adult education provides a larger social role. They look at supporting the individual and they address that individual at the stage in which they are at, at this particular time.

In Windsor, we heard from Bill Callen, a 39-year-old former truck driver who lost his job due to injury. For him, it went beyond skills and self-confidence. In Bill's words, it gave him "a greater sense of belonging in the community; I feel more a part of the community. I'm involved with more parts of the community.... I'm looking to do some volunteer work" for the first time this summer, "which is something that had never crossed my mind until I went back to high school."

Another adult educator we heard from during the hearings said that our biggest contribution is helping the adult learner to believe that he or she can do it. "We know they can do it," he said, "but they have to learn to believe in themselves." I think that's fairly profound.

The question we must ask is what we want to gain out of providing these opportunities for adult learners. One adult educator stated, "The issue to me is really the expectation on the part of any citizen to get a level of education that would allow them to become a participant in their community, an active participant in the economy of the country, a proud neighbour. All of those things we would like to see in our sons-in-law and our daughters-in-law when we talk about our future."

For many returning students, as in the case of Bill Callen and Wanda Gould, their return to high school has had a tremendously positive impact on their lives. These two cases show positive benefits that this program returns to our society and our community. I find it quite incredible that we've had presentations from over 70 groups, the vast majority of which strongly extolled the values of the two programs of junior kindergarten and adult

education programming, and yet the government moves forward with its agenda, an agenda that ignores all of that body of wisdom, all of that body of advice. Because as I said before, this is a money bill. It pained me to see people working hard and coming forward with the kind of research and with the kind of thoughtfulness that they did, addressing what they thought was an educational bill, and really their testimony had nothing to say to the economics of it.

There is one area in the bill where the government came in with amendments and the parliamentary assistant identified that. That was in section 9, dealing with the equalization payments from negative grant boards, which are, as everyone knows, those boards which do not receive transfer payments from the province due to sufficient local commercial and industrial property tax. The two significant amendments in my opinion were window-dressing. Instead of making equalization payments, these boards can now enter into an agreement with the Minister of Education to make a payment. So now it's no longer explicitly in the legislation that the payment goes to the Minister of Finance, because that has been taken out. This was an amendment put forward by the government side.

But the intent of the section remains the same. Negative grant boards in the present situation, Metro Toronto and Ottawa, are still expected to remit a total of something in the neighbourhood of \$80 million of locally generated education tax dollars to the province. The rationale behind this is that it's unfair for boards that rely on provincial grants to bear the full brunt of the cuts. I for one feel that all of these cuts are unfair in the first place, but there you have it. We need not be doing them.

There is no guarantee that the money that these two boards, Metro Toronto board and Ottawa, provide will be used to offset reductions in education transfers. I have asked, "Where is the assurance for Metro Toronto and Ottawa taxpayers that this money will actually be used for education purposes?" No one can give me that guarantee or even an answer — not the parliamentary assistant, not the minister nor the minister's office, nor the deputy minister's office nor other officials' offices.

2310

To my mind, there are only two ways this could occur. This is really important because you're going to have a taxpayers' revolution on your back. One way would of course be to require that these boards return the equalization payment back to their own taxpayers. The government likes to support tax cuts; send the money, those equalization payments, back to the taxpayers. No problem. The only other way, it seems to me, would be through an increase in the ministry budget for educational purposes that would be verifiably auditable.

The taxpayers in Ottawa and Metro Toronto will be watching; not only the taxpayers in Metro Toronto or Ottawa, but the taxpayers in all the school boards throughout Ontario, because they will be interested to see the implications of this. Any attempt at coercion or a private side deal, such as the minister had tentatively with the Metro board, will not work this time. Ratepayers in Ottawa have said very clearly that they are not prepared to facilitate the transfer of locally collected education



dollars to the general ledger fund of the province. The boards are conscious of how the cuts are hitting assessment-poor boards; however, they do not support giving local property tax dollars raised for educational purposes to the provincial treasury.

I question this also. Indeed, many others are watching — municipalities, regions — because if the province can move in on local taxes that are collected for a specific purpose and grab those, think of the implications for municipalities in other areas. I question it because it sets, as I just mentioned, a dangerous precedent for the province — powers it doesn't have. I'll be looking for some answers on this particular question when we review the ministry's spending once again at estimates next week.

As I wind down, I would like to say that Bill 34, in conjunction with the reductions in the general legislative grants, is imposing an economic agenda on the Ontario education system. It will be regressive in the long term and have a negative impact on both quality and accessibility. This year we are having a debate in relative obscurity on the full impact of the almost \$1 billion, because even the first \$400 million has not taken effect as of yet. We will see in September. The bill is really a money bill for the Treasurer, money taken totally out of education. This bill will hurt education this year and in the years to come. We will pay dearly, I regretfully submit, and for this reason I will be voting against Bill 34.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Questions and comments?

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener):** Mr Speaker, I have a point of order. Earlier this evening we had a misunderstanding on the deferred voting on the two previous bills, Bill 46 and Bill 36. The three parties have reached an agreement and I would like to advise that we are seeking unanimous consent from the House that we defer the votes on second reading for Bill 46 and second reading for Bill 36 to immediately following question period on Wednesday, June 19.

**The Speaker:** The member for Algoma on a point of order.

**Mr Wildman:** Mr Speaker, this wouldn't have happened if the member for Carleton hadn't interfered in the role of the member for Kitchener.

**The Speaker:** Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed? Agreed.

Comments and questions?

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** I would like to compliment the member for Ottawa Centre on his comments. As he indicated a good number of times, these comments came about through a good number of observations from a committee that looked into Bill 34 and a good number of presentations that came to the committee. It is my hope that the minister will pay attention to some of the very good views that were put forth.

The member for Ottawa Centre mentioned Wanda Gould. I happened to be on the committee that day and remember very vividly her story about what adult education had done for her as a person who was looking for upgrading, a person who wanted to get into the workforce. It reminded me of a student who came to my

office, actually through the co-op program through adult education, and has now gone on to become a full-time employee of a community service within the community. I cannot say enough about the program and what it has done.

I go back to the specific hearings that we had, hearings from individuals who had actually taken part in these programs and had been very successful. I hope the minister pays attention to that.

In terms of the comments made by my colleague the member for Ottawa Centre with regard to the minister indicating that boards that could show savings would be rewarded and that they would work very closely with any boards that could show savings, we have an instance with the Red Lake Board of Education, which came forth and showed the minister great savings in terms of transportation and still wants an answer from the minister as to what that will bring back to it, an issue I will be bringing to the minister's attention again.

I compliment my colleague from Ottawa Centre on a very good presentation.

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** I want to compliment the member for Ottawa Centre as well on his remarks and also add that it was a great honour for me to share with him some of the duties in terms of the public hearings on Bill 34 and some of the travel. Certainly it was enlightening for me to listen to the many presentations that eloquently tried to explain to this government the value and the need for junior kindergarten and adult education.

I remember specifically the presentation made by the Prospect School Parents' Association in Thunder Bay, which very much tried to give the viewpoint of what it was like in terms of the community value of a school and what important input the parents and the children and the volunteers had.

I recall as well Jackie Methot in Thunder Bay, a mother with a child with special needs trying to explain to the committee and the government members how crucial it was that the educational needs of her children need to be taken seriously.

Certainly, as my colleague pointed out, there were some amendments put forward by the opposition and by the member for Ottawa Centre that answered many of the needs that were clearly put forward by the presenters, and that in many ways and in many cases were also ones the government members made clear they thought should go forward. He mentioned specifically the aspect of early childhood educators being certified as teachers in kindergarten being one that the government members wanted, and the member for Brant-Haldimand on the government side did support it. It was a shame that the other government members didn't do so.

I think he made it very clear in his statement that indeed what became unfortunately clear to us, as we continued the process and wound it down in clause-by-clause, was that indeed this was a money bill, that the intent of this government was to grab the money. They weren't going to listen to any changes. Even when they recognized that some of the amendments were worthwhile, they said, "We're not quite ready to accept them." That was a shame.



**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** I would also like to add my appreciation for the remarks from the member for Ottawa Centre. It really does reflect an important standpoint on this bill in terms of the future of public education. It reflects very well the concerns that were brought up to me during the election campaign in York South, particularly about adult education. In the riding of York South 34 teachers have already been laid off in anticipation of some of the effects of this bill and some of the cuts that have already taken place.

When you look at a riding composed of people, many of whom have worked for their whole lives, paid taxes, worked in construction, worked in different jobs, but 20% of whom have only grade 8 education, this is another dead end being handed to them by this government in terms of their lack of confidence and a really outdated idea of what education should be about, not facilitating people's access to education so they can advance themselves in society and instead putting them in a rut and in a dead end.

The same anxiety was shared by a lot of young parents about their kids, about the ability to provide for them, and rather than have regard for the efficiencies that could be gained from JK or from using the school facilities for early childhood education, we find instead a backhand on the part of this government towards the idea of using education, not simply for giving people their statutory 12 years in school but to have them really advance as part of society. Those are some of the concerns that the people in York South are having.

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The board in the city of York has managed to make room this year for JK, but at a cost of some 120 teachers in total who have gone from the board. So we know that the sacrifices the boards are going to have to make to pursue those objectives without the support of this government and without, more importantly, the understanding of this government are very, very threatening to them. Further, the people who live in the urban areas like Metro that are faced with the negative granting coming forward under this bill find themselves threatened in terms of dealing with the extra cost, the worrisome agenda that happens in urban areas and again not being supported by this government and being subjected to this unusual tax.

These are the kinds of concerns that the member has already brought up to some extent and I'd like to add my voice to.

**The Speaker:** The member's time has expired. Further comments or statements?

**Mr Skarica:** I'd just like to make a couple of comments. Being an outsider to the education system, I received a shock during the hearings in a number of different ways. One came when I was using a slip of paper from the Ministry of Education outlining the operating expenses of all the different school boards. I was using it to cross-examine the various school boards as to how efficient they were.

On the second to last day of the three-week hearings, when I was pointing out to the Sault Ste Marie board that their operating expenses were twice what they were in Wentworth county, they said, "No, no, we've cut to the

bone." I said, "No, no, Wentworth county is half of what yours are, and that's cutting to the bone." They said, "No, no, we've cut to the bone." I said, "How do you explain that you spend twice as much in operating expenses than the Wentworth county board or Brant board?" They told me, "Our operating expenses are not the same as Wentworth's operating expenses."

I talked to the bureaucrats: "Is that true? Can we spend \$11 billion a year on a system where 157 different school boards have different accounting systems so that you can't compare one to the other?" The answer I got was a simple yes.

We are spending \$11 billion a year on a system that has no accountability. I can't compare the Wentworth board to the Brant board, to the Sault board or to any board in the province because they all have different accounting procedures. It's like comparing apples to oranges to bananas.

This system has been going on now for 50 years, 70 years or 100 years or whatever. Why hasn't anybody wanted to reform it? Yet when we try to reform it, when you try to change it, you're attacking children. We're not attacking children. Just because you have an education system doesn't mean you have a blank cheque or a black hole where you throw billions and billions of dollars into the system; that's what we've got and that's what the opposition wants to keep. We did listen to people. We heard that the education finance system was broken and that it's not accountable, and we've put in the sunset clause that will force the government to fix it.

**The Speaker:** The member's time has expired. The member for Ottawa Centre has up to two minutes.

**Mr Patten:** I'd like to respond quickly. I'd like to thank the members for Kenora, Port Arthur and York South for their kind comments. I'd like to respond to the parliamentary assistant, the member for Wentworth North.

Nobody disagrees that there are not savings to be found in administration. As a matter of fact, I think everyone agrees that you could find savings in administration. But I will point out to the members on the government side to beware next September. This bill makes cuts in certain areas. It doesn't say, "Strip or cut down on your administration" per se. It says: "You will not get this amount of money for junior kindergarten. You will not get this amount of money for adult education. You will not have new schools this year. You will take this amount from certain areas."

That's where the government got in trouble. If they had said, and the school board association had said, "If you had come to us and asked us, 'How can we work with you to find those savings?'" they wouldn't have half the problems they're going to have next September. Because, believe me, when the schools come back, it won't be just from administration —

**Hon Bob Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** Come on, Richard. You don't believe that.

**Mr Patten:** Well, we'll see. They'll also find out if kids from their neighbours are not able to go to junior kindergarten any more and not be able to pay their way.

**Mr Speaker:** I'll leave it there in the interests of time tonight.



**The Speaker:** Further debate? The leader of the third party.

**Mr Wildman:** I won't be speaking at great length since this is third reading and most of the arguments around this legislation were made at second reading, and of course they had full airing in the committee hearings across the province.

When I said I wasn't intending to speak at length, I hope I can keep to that, but my friend the member for Wentworth North provoked me. I was with him in his last intervention into the debate when he was commenting on the remarks of my friend from Ottawa Centre. I was with him right up to the end of his remarks, and then he lost me, unfortunately.

Frankly, he was correct when he said we have a problem. There's a serious problem in dealing with issues around education finance. I think the term he used was that we're comparing apples with oranges and bananas. Indeed, we do have a problem, because there is not any set accounting practice that is accepted by the ministry and all the boards. They all have different approaches to accounting. That's not to say they're being irresponsible; it's just that they don't have the same approach. The problem arises when any of us attempts to make comparisons and to make any kinds of rational decisions on the basis of numbers that apply across the province. I agreed with that. I agree with the issue that the member has raised.

I also agree it would be far better and more appropriate if an accepted and agreed upon system of accounting could be devised and implemented that would give us similar numbers so we would be able to make the kinds of comparisons that are necessary so the people could hold boards accountable for their expenditures and so everyone in education would be able to understand what moneys are being expended in what areas and would be able to determine the priorities properly.

The issue centrally is how we define education finance when we talk about administration. How do we determine what is administration and what is classroom education? That is the central issue that my friend from Wentworth North was dealing with.

Where he lost me, though, was when he said that we have this problem and the opposition parties want to maintain it. I don't know why he said that, because I know he knows that's not correct. The fact is, we agree — at least I agree, and I've told him this — that we need to have a system of accounting that everyone understands and that can be used in a rational way to make the arguments about what is financing administration and what is financing classroom education.

When I am opposing Bill 34, I'm not opposing it because I'm opposed to coming up with a rational system that everyone can agree upon for accounting in education. What I'm disagreeing with is that you don't resolve a serious problem of accounting by simply taking money out of the system. Maybe you want to take money out of the system, maybe that's where we should be going in Ontario, but that doesn't resolve an accounting problem. That's where you lost me.

The question of education finance is one that has bedevilled governments and education across the province

for many years. Frankly, the discussion we've been having which was referred to by the member for Wentworth North has not helped to resolve that bedevilment.

We are trying to grapple with a government's promise not to adversely affect classroom education. That's essentially what the presentations before the committee were about. We've got a number of definitions.

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The former member for Kitchener-Wilmot, Mr Sweeney, was appointed by the previous government to do a study on the number of boards in the province and whether they could be reduced. When this government came into power, the new Minister of Education and Training said to Mr Sweeney, "We want to change the way you're going about holding your hearings and having your task force work. We don't want to have a lot of hearings. We want to just avoid a lot of expense, but we also want you to deal with this issue of what is classroom expenditure and what is administration." So after his interim report, Mr Sweeney came back with a report that said, "On average, 47% of school board expenditures are outside of the classroom; 53% on average are in the classroom."

That is where the argument comes to the fore because obviously if you come up with a figure like that, you have to be able to explain what you included in administration or outside of the classroom. It's clear that Mr Sweeney included in out-of-classroom expenditures preparation time, for instance. He also included all of the costs for vice-principals, principals, special education teachers, assistants, remedial teachers, all of those kinds of things. He said, "Those are out-of-classroom expenditures."

Well, okay, that's fine for Mr Sweeney to say, but his resolution, if you want to call it that, or his proposal for how we deal with this issue is not one that is widely accepted in the education sector. I personally don't understand how we can argue that prep time is outside of the classroom. It may be outside of the four walls of the classroom. It may take place in a teacher's office or in the teachers' room or at home or wherever. The during-the-day prep time, though, will take place probably or usually in the school somewhere, but the fact that it's not actually in the classroom is nonsensical if it's leads to the conclusion, "Well, therefore, it's not classroom education." What is the teacher preparing for? Surely she is preparing to teach students or she is doing remedial work or marking or contacting parents, all of those kinds of things to help students perform better and to achieve more in the classroom. That's what she's doing. If she isn't doing that, then she isn't doing preparation as defined by teachers and educators. So I don't agree with Mr Sweeney that this is something that should be said to be outside of the classroom.

I can understand why he might have argued that principals' and vice-principals' salaries and superintendents and all of those are outside of the classroom, but if that's the case, then we have to determine how much of the time each of those people in positions of responsibility are actually doing administrative work and how much of the time they're doing classroom teaching because



some of them do. I think those are the kinds of divisions and decisions that have to be made.

But to have ministers of the crown and members of the governing party get up day after day and just repeat what Mr Sweeney said, that 47% of the expenditures are outside of the classroom, ignores the very difficult issue that the member for Wentworth North raised. We don't have an agreed definition that everyone can accept in the province.

**Mr Tom Froese (St Catharines-Brock):** How are you going to be sure?

**Mr Wildman:** I'm not sure, frankly, if we can come up with easy agreement on this. Governments have had a committee working on education finance reform for some time and it's just come forward with a report and it's interesting that this report basically says: "Well, we had good discussions. We laid out all of the disagreements and all of the problems, all of the issues. We weren't able to come to a resolution, but here are all of the options." They weren't able to choose one; they just said, "This is where it's at," and threw it back to the minister, so the minister is going to have to come up with something. I don't envy him his position on that. I think he genuinely was hoping that the committee would come forward with a proposal which would be helpful to the government and to everyone involved. They haven't been able to come to a resolution and now he's going to have to deal with it.

But the solution to education finance is not simply to take \$400 million out of education in one year.

**Interjection:** It's too late for that.

**Mr Wildman:** The member says it's too late for that, it's already been done. I guess it has. It has to be implemented and the minister has admitted that on an annualized basis, it works out to \$800 million, maybe up to \$1 billion.

The point that all of us heard in the hearings on Bill 34 from parents, from teachers, teachers' organizations, school boards and members of the public was that a government cannot take \$400 million out of the school boards' budgets in a four-month period, cut 16.6% of the general legislative grants in one stroke in that period of time and not adversely affect the classroom. It is impossible. This is a government that, when as a party running for office, said, "Classroom education will be exempt." That's a word from your own document: "exempt" from the cuts.

So when we have in this House raised the issue that classrooms are not exempt, what kind of a response are we getting now from the minister and his minions? They're saying: "It's not our fault. We didn't make those cuts; the boards did. It's the boards' fault. We just told them they were going to get \$400 million less in total and they made these cuts. So it's the boards' fault, not the government's. You can't blame the government. The government didn't tell them to cut these things. The government told them to cut administration, and when they chose not to cut administration, then the parents and the students and the community should be upset with the boards, not with the government. The government's an innocent bystander that just took all this money out and we have these irresponsible trustees and administrators

across the province who are going to harm students by hurting the classroom. It's not the government's fault."

I've had members of the governing party get up in this House and say that: "We didn't make those cuts; it was the boards." It's those terrible boards, I guess. Somehow, they're not with the program. Of course, in the so-called Common Sense Revolution, the Conservative members, when they were running for election, didn't say, "Classroom education will be exempt, as long as the boards agree." They didn't have any parentheses there that said, "But of course, it's up to the boards to ensure this happens." They just said, "Classroom education will be exempt from the cuts."

**Mr Frank Klees (York-Mackenzie):** The rest was understood.

**Mr Wildman:** Oh, the rest was understood. It obviously wasn't understood by the trustees.

**Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton North):** The irresponsible trustees are defying the government.

**Mr Wildman:** We have the member for Brampton North who says it's the irresponsible trustees. I might be tempted to send that piece of Hansard out to all the trustees in the province.

**Mr Spina:** Please do.

**Mr Wildman:** He says, "Please do." I might do it, then.

**Mr Spina:** Please do, because I've told them personally and directly.

**Mr Wildman:** He wants us to tell the boards they're being irresponsible. I will tell you this: if any government of whatever political stripe takes a billion dollars out of education in one year, that government is being irresponsible when it doesn't recognize that it has an obligation to the students in this province, to the communities in this province, to provide quality education across this province.

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*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr Wildman:** I'm confused, Mr Speaker, because now it seems they're arguing that they're not taking \$400 million out.

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** You said \$1 billion.

**Mr Wildman:** Just ask the minister. He has admitted that \$400 million in four months, annualized, works out to \$800 million to \$1 billion. He's admitted that that's what it is annualized. Frankly, he said, if we can do that, great. It's not me who's saying it; it's the Minister of Education and Training who said that.

**Mr Spina:** It's \$400 million in one fiscal year.

**Mr Wildman:** That's right. Annualized, it's \$800 million.

**Mr Spina:** One fiscal year. Forget about annualization.

**Mr Wildman:** He'd like us to tell the boards to forget about annualization. "Don't worry about it. If it happens, it happens," I guess. My goodness.

**Mr Spina:** Now I know why they couldn't balance their budget. They didn't know the difference between an annual year and a fiscal year.

**The Speaker:** Order. Interjections are out of order. Would the member please address through the Chair.



**Mr Wildman:** The interjections are prolonging my presentation, Mr Speaker. The member, I guess, has been suffering from the aftermath of new math. He doesn't understand that you can't just pretend that annualized budgets don't exist and you can just deal with what happens in this government's fiscal year.

The problem we have now, and it's a very serious one, is that we have at least 26 boards that have decided not to present junior kindergarten next year, not to have junior kindergarten programs.

**Mr Spina:** Glorified day care.

**Mr Wildman:** The member says, "Glorified day care," which is an indication that he just doesn't understand early childhood education, as his own minister does. The Minister of Education and Training has admitted that early childhood education and junior kindergarten are crucial for the good, sound academic performance at least for disadvantaged kids — I would argue for all children, but he has admitted at least for disadvantaged kids.

Of the boards that have continued junior kindergarten, many of them have had to make major changes in the way the program is delivered: every other day, full day, combining with kindergarten, all these kinds of changes, which may or may not be good for kids and pedagogy. We'll see.

What really sticks in my craw, because I represent a large expanse of northern Ontario, is what this government has done with regard to the isolate boards and junior kindergarten. For those who are not familiar with this, an isolate board is a very small board in one of the very small communities in northern Ontario that only has one school and has a very, very small assessment base. Isolate boards get almost all of their budgets from the provincial government.

A few of these boards have been able to work out in their budgets that they can continue junior kindergarten on an optional basis, as this government has made it optional, without increasing their budgets. You would think this government, which is interested in efficiency, would say: "That's a good thing. These boards have been able to continue this program and they're not having to increase their budgets." But no. The Ministry of Education and Training sends out a directive to these boards saying, "If you're going to continue junior kindergarten, you must increase your budget by 5%." You must. They've directed these boards to increase their taxes by 5% if they want to keep junior kindergarten. How on earth can that be justified? This is a government that is supposedly opposed to tax increases, and it is directing these boards to increase their taxes by 5%. I don't understand that. I don't understand why they would want to do that.

The other major area that was presented to us in the hearings was the question of adult education. This is a government that says it wants people to gain skills that will make them productive so that they can provide for themselves and their families, make it in the workplace, go on to post-secondary education and be productive and contribute to society. Yet for those adults who have returned to complete their high school diplomas in a day program, they have basically said to them: "This is not what we want. We don't want you to be in school. If

you're going to take courses, you must take just continuing education courses, probably at night. If you're over 20 or 21, you're not going to be allowed to go to the day program." That in itself is discrimination on the basis of age and I suspect will lead to challenges before the Human Rights Commission in itself. You can't tell a person they can't go to school on the basis of their age. I don't understand that.

But at any rate, the minister is now saying that they can go to continuing education. Continuing education is not going to be possible for many of these people because they don't have day care at night. Many of them are going to have to look after their children at home, they won't be able to do it, and as a result they're going to be in the welfare trap. This in itself is a denial of the government's own agenda, what it wants for people, what it believes people should be doing. I don't understand why the government is doing this.

What they are proposing in this bill and with the changes they are making in the funding of school boards is counterproductive. It's not good for the education of students, it's not good for our society, and in fact it's a contradiction of their own stated program. It doesn't make sense.

For those reasons, my caucus will be opposing this legislation on third reading.

**Mr Stockwell:** "As long as I am leader."

**Mr Wildman:** We regret that the government did not move to make significant amendments. I would perhaps talk about —

**Mr Baird:** "I put my leadership on the line."

**Mr Wildman:** Watch it.

I might be tempted to talk about the negative-grant boards and the comments made in this House by the member for Etobicoke West and others.

**Mr Stockwell:** We fixed it.

**Mr Wildman:** He says they fixed it because they've put a sunset provision in. We all know that the reason for the sunset is simply to hold things over so they can take the money until such time as the minister has figured out what he's going to do on education finance reform so that he can get more money from those kinds of boards for the rest of the province.

For all of those reasons, we oppose this legislation, and I sincerely hope the government members, the members of the party who support the government, will do everything they can to encourage the Minister of Education and Training to actually find out what it means, what the significance is of taking \$400 million out of the school boards' budgets in this fiscal year and what it means on an annualized basis for students in this province. It is going to adversely affect classroom education whether he likes it or not.

**The Speaker:** Questions or comments? The member for Wentworth North.

**Mr Skarica:** I'd just like to deal with one issue that my friend from Algoma raised. He says it's impossible to take money out of education and not affect the classroom. I'd like to talk about what is possible when there's a way.

One of the boards in my area in Hamilton, a Roman Catholic board, is a resource-poor board on that piece of paper I got from the ministry that's basically worthless,



for reasons that I indicated earlier. They're in one of the lower operating expenses and they were able to save \$3 million because the administrators, the teachers, the maintenance people all got together and said, "Look, we're prepared to take a minor benefit and salary cut in order that the classroom is not affected." They did that, just like we all did in the House. We took a 5% pay cut. I personally didn't notice it. We all took pay cuts. Probably the only person here who took a pay cut and noticed it was the member for Algoma. He took more than the rest of us because he was a minister last year.

There are some things we heard in the hearings that I don't understand. We heard about one board which took a 2% to 3% cut in its overall budget, and its class sizes, we heard, increased 41%. I didn't go to junior kindergarten, so maybe that's why I don't understand this, but how does a 2% to 3% cut in their operating budget translate into a 41% increase in class sizes? I don't understand that.

Another thing we never heard once in three weeks of hearings — we heard about pink slips to teachers — was about a pink slip to an administrator; we never heard about one. You were there. The best we heard was that there are six administrators in Toronto making over \$100,000 are not being replaced.

**The Speaker:** The time has expired. Further questions or comments? The member for Algoma has up to two minutes to respond.

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**Mr Wildman:** In the interests of time, Mr Speaker, I won't respond at any length and use all the time. My only comment is not that you couldn't take any money out of education without affecting the classroom; it's just that you couldn't take this much in such a short time out of education and not affect the classroom. I sincerely believe that, and that's what almost everyone who appeared before the committee told us.

**The Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** I rise to oppose Bill 34 because it does nothing for children. It damages the quality of education in Ontario and will do irreparable harm to what we consider to be sacred: the promotion of the future of the youth of Ontario.

Before I get into that, I just want to congratulate the Sudbury unit of the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association who tonight are honouring their 25-year teachers and their retiring teachers. I'd like to refer to Lorraine Dupuis, who is a teacher being honoured with 25 years. I tell you, because it's very relevant to the discussion later on, that this is a former colleague of mine who loves children, who loves the adolescents she teaches, who teaches with a great deal of vim, vigour and vitality, puts forth her best efforts all the time because she wants to bring out the best in children, and she's done that for 25 years.

I'd also like to refer to Maryanne Sauvé, Ron Rowe, Lois Turcotte, John Robb, Bill and Mary Stenabaugh who are being honoured as they retire this evening, each of them having more than 32 years of experience with the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association Sudbury unit. These people have dedicated their efforts on a continuing basis because they believe that children are

important. They also believe that to do their jobs, they must have the resources to facilitate and bring out the best in each individual child.

Because I wanted to ensure that I get the right perspective of this, I sent out a survey to all teachers in the Sudbury district. I sent out 2,200 surveys and received back 1,166. That's a return rate of 53%, and when you look at the average being 1%, I hope you understand that teachers in Sudbury are deeply concerned with what's happening in education today.

I just want to highlight a few questions I asked in the survey. The first one was, "Do you feel it is necessary for the provincial government to trim educational funding by approximately \$800 million?" A resounding 78% said no, that that's wrong.

The second question was, "Do you feel the Ministry of Education's toolkit, which makes junior kindergarten a local option and reduces adult education funding, will provide boards and educators with adequate direction and means for reducing expenditures?" Not surprisingly, 79% of the teachers said no, that that was a wrong direction to take.

The third question was, "Do you feel the government's new cost-cutting strategy affects classroom education?" These are the front-line workers. Well, 99% of the people who responded said, "Yes, it's going to affect the classroom."

The fourth question was, "Do you feel the government's new cost-cutting strategy will increase student-teacher ratios?" These cost-cutting strategies are not supposed to affect the classroom. Well, 93% of the teachers responded, "Yes, categorically, it will affect student-teacher ratios."

Question 4(b) of that question was, "If you answered 'Yes,' do you feel an increase in class size would be detrimental to students?" We know that the minister says the cuts he's made aren't going to be detrimental to students. They're not going to affect student-teacher ratios; they're not going to affect class size. Well, the front-line workers disagree with the minister and they disagree with the government, because 93% said that it's going to have a detrimental effect.

We asked them, "Do you have any strategies that you'd like to" —

**Mr Stockwell:** Front-line workers? Teachers aren't front-line workers.

**Mr Bartolucci:** Excuse me, but teachers are the front-line workers in a classroom. The member for Etobicoke West may not understand that, but they are. He'd like to tell the teachers in his riding that they're not front-line workers. I hope that he gets up at response time and says that teachers are not front-line workers.

We asked in a further question: "Do you have any ideas that you can give the government? Are you opposed to or in favour of several options; for example, an early retirement package?" Well, 88% said they were in favour of an early retirement package, 85 factor. The reason for that —

**Mr Stockwell:** What a shock. Say no more. Heart, be still.

**Mr Bartolucci:** You don't have to get up, Mr Speaker. The nonsense over there doesn't bother us at all. We just



allow it. It's like being in a classroom and you get the disrupters, the behaviour problems that, if we allowed this to go through, teachers wouldn't have the resources to deal with. We don't have to worry about that. Those are behaviour problems that this government thinks don't exist in a classroom.

Some 88% are in favour of an early retirement package, and you know why? Because it will give younger teachers an opportunity to work. This government doesn't worry about that; "There are all kinds of jobs out there." When you take \$800 million out of education, you're creating employment? The minister stands up and says that young teachers are going to have opportunities for employment. That's ridiculous.

"Are you in favour of job-sharing?" Some 51% said "Yes, we're in favour of job-sharing to allow opportunities for young teachers to get experience." It makes sense. This government doesn't like to listen to perfect sense. They like to implement common sense that doesn't make any sense.

The 11th question I asked was, "In 1993 the World Economic Forum ranked Canada eighth in education quality. Do you feel the Harris government strategy, as outlined in the famous toolkit, will improve Canada's standing?" Some 81% said no.

You know what they said in the comments section, as an example? "More students per class plus less available technology plus a group of underpaid and overworked teachers will equal a miserable ranking for Canada in five years."

Those are only some of the 21 questions I asked, and because the time is almost up I will allow you to adjourn the House. When we continue the debate I will go into how we will pay for the \$800 million that will be taken out.

**The Speaker:** The member for Sudbury adjourns the debate. This House is adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 2400.*



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## Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Wednesday 19 June 1996

Mercredi 19 juin 1996



Speaker  
Honourable Allan K. McLean

Président  
L'honorable Allan K. McLean

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 19 June 1996

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 19 juin 1996

*The House met at 1333.  
Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

**Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent):** In my riding there have been several tragedies in past years which resulted in the needless deaths of young Ontario students. These are devastating cases where children, either boarding or leaving a school bus, become the victims of careless drivers who ignore flashing school bus lights. This is not a new problem, nor is it unique to my riding. Every year, young people die because drivers do not take the flashing school bus light seriously enough.

Later today I will be introducing a private member's bill to address this problem. First, my bill will double the range of fines for drivers who are identified breaking the school bus law. Historically, the problem has been identifying drivers. Often there is time to ID a vehicle, a plate number, but not to see the driver. For the first time in the history of the province, my bill will target the owners of vehicles who break school bus laws. They will be subject to fines double the range of those for identified drivers. This would provide incentive to the vehicle owner to identify the actual driver of the car. This way, demerit points are assigned to the driver who is breaking the law.

I believe my bill can protect young people across the province by providing an effective deterrent to drivers who ignore existing school bus laws. It has the support of community safety groups, police, and a local school board in my riding, and I hope all members of this House will give their support to it.

### YOUTH SERVICES

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** Recently I had the opportunity to attend an event called You(th) Need to Know, organized by St Christopher's House, a youth agency in the area that I represent, together with other agencies. We heard at that event from a number of young people who had written about their experiences over the last year or so following the beginning of the Mike Harris government.

I want to just read into the record part of the comments of one young person, Claudia Calderon, age 18, who wrote as follows:

"This generation is the seeds.

"The children are the seeds that flourish into the youth that are affected by society in the future. During the past five months or so that the newly elected Progressive

Conservative Party got elected and announced the 'Common Sense Revolution' of Ontario, the key target of those cuts have been youth. Others affected include immigrants, single mothers and their children, and the unemployed.

"These cuts affect my friends, family and myself in countless forms. Through education cuts, my school will have less money to buy new facilities and equipment for students which would help to provide an effective environment to learn in....

"My future is also at stake since tuition fees and the grade averages for acceptance to university are increasing so dramatically. This will make it harder for me to focus on my work, family and extracurricular activities....

"The poor and working class of this province must fight for a fair province for all of Ontario, especially since we as youth are being affected by this leadership when we didn't have a say in voting them to power."

This is very typical of the comments that these young people and many young people have, which is to say that what Mike Harris is doing is very clearly hurting young people.

### ETOBICOKE AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

**Mr Douglas B. Ford (Etobicoke-Humber):** I had the pleasure recently of attending an event to celebrate the Etobicoke Awards of Excellence, where a significant number of individuals and organizations in Etobicoke were recognized for their contribution to the community.

The businesses that were recognized include Ital Florist Ltd, Confectionately Yours, Delsan Environmental Group, Campbell's Soup Co, Canada Trust, the Rocket Fuel Coffee Shop, Versa Services, Lennox Industries, and Allied Signal Aerospace.

As well, the individuals who received awards were Irene Cameron, Anita Lal, Tom MacFarlane, Wilma Verch, Art Rutledge, Miriam Christie, Doreen Hachey, Arden Lambe, Tanya Monestier, Stephanie Stasyna, Constable Ernie Jost, who is an outstanding young constable with many awards, Stewart Davidson Sr, and the staff and students of Etienne Brûlé junior school.

As my colleagues on both side of this chamber can appreciate, the greatest assets of any community are not the bricks and mortar, but the people who give the community its heart and soul. The people who were individually recognized and those who make up the organizations which were acknowledged are people for whom I have great regard. They have made a significant contribution towards making the city of Etobicoke even a better place to live, and for that —

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** The member's time has expired.



## STUDENT ASSISTANCE

**Ms Annamarie Castrilli (Downsview):** The Minister of Education, since taking office, has slashed funding to colleges and universities by \$400 million, resulting in program closures, course cancellations, and faculty and staff layoffs. He has increased tuition by as much as 20% and kicked 17,000 students off social assistance, making our system much less accessible.

Now it appears that single and married parents are being informed by financial aid offices that their child care bursaries will not be renewed and that by 1997-98 all bursaries will be eliminated.

Most recently, I have been informed that this government is cancelling its 1-800 Ontario student assistance program information line and replacing it with a 1-900 line that charges students to access information on their OSAP applications. These are people who are seeking loans because they do not have enough money to pay the increased tuition for college and university, yet this government now wants them to use money they don't have simply to find out whether they will be able to borrow enough to attend classes.

Given the seriousness of this situation, I call upon the Minister of Education to assure students that new loan funding for child care will be in addition to OSAP's current maximum of \$17,000, that they can access OSAP loans for child care in between semesters so they can find summer work, that the \$6,000 loan forgiveness level will be guaranteed for the next four years, that income-contingent loan repayments will be implemented within the next 12 months and that the government's OSAP funding level will be adequate to handle all of these new responsibilities.

1340

## SENIOR CITIZENS' MONTH

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** June is Senior Citizens' Month in Ontario and my colleagues and I in the New Democratic Party join in saluting all seniors across the province.

Many seniors make invaluable contributions to the wellbeing of this province by giving generously of their time as volunteer workers in their community. We are indeed very grateful for their help, given the deep cuts that many agencies have had to endure over the last year under the present government.

I must say that many are beginning to feel abandoned by this government. The seniors at the First Portuguese Community Centre are very distressed. They, along with all other seniors, are being targeted and sacrificed because they are now forced to pay a \$2 prescription fee every single time they visit the pharmacist. For many seniors this can easily mean that five different prescriptions in one month can cost as much as \$10. This might seem like a small amount of money to some, but this fee affects those earning less than \$16,000 a year. For those earning \$16,100 or more, a higher fee is charged.

This is but one example of how government cuts are affecting seniors and causing disruption and anxiety among our older population living on a rapidly diminishing fixed income.

Seniors deserve dignity and security and nothing less.

## OSTEOPOROSIS

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** I'm very pleased to announce that yesterday Allelix Biopharmaceuticals Inc of Mississauga, Ontario, and Astra AB of Sweden reached a long-term agreement for the worldwide development and commercialization of PTH. This is Allelix's lead experimental product for the treatment of osteoporosis.

Approximately 1.4 million Canadians suffer from osteoporosis. It is a crippling disease that causes bones to become brittle and porous and to break very easily. Allelix's PTH is an important advance against osteoporosis as it potentially brings a person out of the dangerous and painful fracture zone.

Astra Canada, which is a subsidiary of Astra AB, is Canada's fastest-growing research-based pharmaceutical manufacturer. Employing approximately 700 people across Canada, Astra Canada is headquartered in my riding of Mississauga South.

Allelix is a Canadian biotechnology company that uses advanced research to discover and develop innovative pharmaceutical products. The company employs over 150 Canadians and also has an office in Mississauga.

This agreement, which is one of the largest ever made in the Canadian biotechnological industry, is exactly the kind of investment that Canada needs in order to compete in the global market. I would like to congratulate both Astra Canada and Allelix for their major contribution to Ontario's economy and for the tremendous accomplishment of developing a treatment for all Canadians who suffer from osteoporosis.

## KENORA FIRE

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** On Friday, June 7, the town of Kenora and area residents woke up to what was called one of the worst fires in the history of the communities.

At approximately 5 am the call went out to the fire department of Kenora. Keewatin and Jaffray-Melick volunteer firefighters were called in minutes after the first truck arrived at the scene when those directing the effort realized the fire was too much for one department to handle. Forty dedicated professional and volunteer firefighters responded to what was a blazing inferno. Three neighbouring structures in Kenora were completely destroyed by the fire, which caused millions of dollars of damage to a number of local businesses. It was because of the quick response of the three fire teams that the fire was not allowed to spread to the residential areas to its south or to the fuel storage tanks to the north.

I cannot say enough about those firefighters we have throughout northwestern Ontario who serve in our communities, at times risking their own lives to ensure our safety. Be it the full-time firefighters or the volunteer firefighters in communities throughout our region, I wish to recognize their efforts.

May I close in having the House join me in congratulating not only those who controlled the Kenora blaze, but those who are a part of our fire team throughout Ontario.



## TOURIST ESTABLISHMENT LICENCES

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** In northwestern Ontario tourism is a huge business. People come from European countries, from Japan and the United States and from elsewhere in Canada to enjoy the natural environment, the wilderness and the wildlife. So if you're a tourist operator, it is especially important that you have a tourism establishment licence, one that you can show to your guests and one which lends legitimacy to your business.

That used to be the case; with this government that is no longer the case. Tourist establishment after tourist establishment has sent in its money for its tourism licence for 1996, but has not received a licence. Instead, they get letters like this from the new government:

"According to our records you have not obtained your...tourist establishment licence. Your notification for renewal was mailed to you...."

"We strongly encourage you to maintain a current licence for several reasons. First, under the Tourism Act, it is an offence" if you don't have one. "Second, there are a number of privileges which accompany the tourist establishment licence.... Should your licence lapse" you will lose a number of privileges.

Imagine when tourist operators all across northwestern Ontario have paid for their tourism licence, have not received their tourism licence and yet this government sends them these kinds of letters, threatening letters; imagine when they do not have the tourism licence to put up on their business and tourists ask if they are a registered tourism business.

Shame on this government.

## LABOUR PROTEST

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** I rise in the House to comment on labour's day of protest occurring in Peterborough on June 24.

This is not a day of protest; this is a labour disruption.

There is no doubt that people have the right to demonstrate and protest, but not at the expense of others.

OFL leader Gord Wilson made a statement to the local media saying, "We will shut down the city." His statement is intimidation, it is harassment and it is unacceptable to most of the taxpayers in Peterborough.

As employers are shut down, the only people who lose are the local workers who are forced to forgo a day's pay. It is estimated that the day of protest will cost the city of Peterborough \$100,000. Imagine what \$100,000 could do to assist the poor and the most vulnerable of that city.

Labour believes these rallies will help the underprivileged. They will not. They are wrong. The people of Peterborough want to work. When the buses carry the union bosses into Peterborough to intimidate our community, I hope they don't forget to bring a cheque for \$100,000 made payable to the people of Peterborough.

If we believe in democracy — and we do — I can assure you they will not shut down the city of Peterborough.

## ANNUAL REPORT, ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSIONER OF ONTARIO

## ANNUAL REPORT, OFFICE OF THE INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** I beg to inform the House, I have today laid upon the table the 1994-95 annual report of the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario and the 1995-96 annual report of the Office of the Integrity Commissioner.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

## SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** We know that when children go to school hungry, they cannot concentrate; when they cannot concentrate, they cannot learn; and when they cannot learn, they cannot cope with the challenges of life ahead of them.

This morning, at a meeting of more than 200 CEOs of Ontario-based food and food distribution companies, it was my pleasure to announce the formation of a partnership between our government, the Canadian Living Foundation and the Grocery Industry Foundation Together in the area of child nutrition.

In our government's first budget, we announced our intention to establish a partnership with the Canadian Living Foundation to set up and expand local nutrition programs and to provide up to \$5 million this year in startup funding. The Grocery Industry Foundation Together, known as GIFT, has now joined this partnership and will contribute the retail equivalent of \$3 million over three years in the form of food and food distribution costs to nutrition programs in Ontario.

1350

These funds will be used to provide seed money to support Ontario-based nutrition programs; to establish an Ontario-wide community partners program to work with school boards, corporations, parents' groups, health departments, service clubs and community-based organizations to initiate local partnerships to establish child nutrition programs; to prepare an information kit on how to set up and sustain nutrition programs in Ontario; and to establish a 1-800 number to respond to community inquiries over the next year.

This program will be in place in time for the school year in September. We will ensure that all members of the Legislature have information as it becomes available in order that they have an opportunity to take a leadership role in encouraging local businesses, volunteers, parents and community-based organizations within their own constituencies to play a role in this initiative.

Members of the House may recall that in November 1991 I introduced a private member's resolution calling for the government to act as a coordinating body in creating school nutrition programs. In a non-partisan way, we have 130 ambassadors of this program across the province.

Thanks in large part to Julia Munro, my parliamentary assistant, the member for Durham-York, I believe the



spirit of that resolution has now become a reality. Over the past year, she has held consultations with many organizations and individuals across the province on ways to make it easier for communities to establish nutrition programs.

The common message she heard was that school-aged children need to have easier, greater and less bureaucratic access to proper nutrition programs. This partnership allows the government to expand and build upon, rather than compete with, the efforts of the volunteer and private sectors.

I've often said that Ontarians working together can do much more than government can do alone. By working with the volunteer and corporate sectors, the government will ensure that the largest possible share of available funding goes directly to meeting children's needs. I encourage all members of this House to take part in this worthwhile initiative.

### FOREST FIREFIGHTING

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines):** I wish to update the House on the forest fire situation in northern Ontario. As members know, towards the end of last week a serious situation developed across the north. Right now, there are more than 200 fires burning in the province, covering an area of about 230,000 hectares; 61 of these fires are considered problem fires.

Yesterday I travelled to the Thunder Bay fire centre, Graham, English River, the Black Sturgeon Lake area and the Rinker Lake fire base camp. I'm glad to report at first hand that our provincial fire program is responding efficiently and quickly to ensure that human safety and protection of valuable resources is being maintained. Our highly mobile attack crews are continuing to be positioned so that they are best able to react to the new fires as they start.

I have the highest praise for the aggressive work being done by MNR fire crews, the first nations fire crews, crews from the forest industry and out-of-province professionals under extremely trying conditions. The morale in the lines is high.

This is a serious fire situation and we are using all our resources to control it. At present, my ministry has more than 1,400 firefighters employed in initial and sustained attack across the province. In the long tradition of mutual support of other jurisdictions, MNR regular and auxiliary crews have been joined by crews from the United States, British Columbia and Alberta. As well, we have more than 600 additional personnel from Ontario employed in a variety of supply and service functions in support of fire suppression efforts. We also have on loan two water bombers from Alberta and two from the Northwest Territories.

We are thankful for this input from other jurisdictions because right now fire activity is extreme in various parts of North America from Alaska to New Brunswick. Resources are stretched in terms of both teams and equipment.

It is normal practice to bring in outside crews when the province's fire situation becomes intense. Ontario,

through the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre in Winnipeg, is part of an international group of provinces and states that shares resources through a mutual aid agreement. Ontario recently provided 10 crews to Quebec to assist in that province's firefighting efforts.

MNR is also utilizing people in Ontario who are trained and can assist in fighting these fires. We are setting up a training network for the west fire region to recertify firefighters with previous training and experience.

Due to the continuing hot weather conditions and an increase in human-caused fires, the situation remains serious. I am today expanding the restricted fire zone that is currently in effect. The zone will include Sault Ste Marie, Sudbury, North Bay and all of Manitoulin Island. This expansion will come into effect at tonight. Included in this restricted fire zone is all of northwestern Ontario, and the parts of northeastern Ontario located north of the line running from the Quebec border at Mattawa and along Highway 17 and the French River.

Once again, I want to thank the firefighters and the communities for the way they have come together to fight this problem. I will keep members of this House informed of further developments on the fire situations as they occur.

### SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** On behalf of the Liberal caucus, I want to especially congratulate the Grocery Industry Foundation for their acknowledgement of the significance of breakfast programs in schools. To the Premier I want to say that what I would like him to do is dust off his copy of a package that we submitted to him on February 2 where we outlined the kinds of minimal changes he needs to make to ensure that breakfast programs begin in places where they're truly needed.

While the cereal is very important for programs, what is very important is the fridge that you have to put the milk in for the cereal, and what's very critical to this is startup costs. The largest hurdle that schools face is the initial launching funds required to initiate programs. Unfortunately, the Premier is spending a lot of time on areas that are not really the crux of the matter where school programs are concerned.

We all know there is a need. We really need to keep him focused. I fear that our Premier is more like a bull in a china shop, and these kinds of announcements are more for publicity because they are not going to the heart of the issue, the real need to get breakfast programs started in Ontario.

I would submit that we did consult with the communities, we do have some answers, and I am asking that the Premier seriously consider those implementations.

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** I commend GIFT as well for their corporate responsibility, but Premier, when you were in opposition you said you could implement a breakfast program "tomorrow."

Well, it's been a long 24 hours — roughly 377 days, and much has happened in those last long 24 hours: 14,000 child care subsidy spaces have been eliminated;



junior kindergarten has been made a local option; reduction of funding to children's aid societies has taken place; a 21.6% reduction to welfare benefits; reductions in funding for children with disabilities; over 100 agencies have downsized or terminated special programs for children, with another 430 under review in 1996; food bank usage went up 54% in one year.

Mrs Ecker, in her statement during debate on the children's bill of rights, said, "This \$5-million commitment is a modest investment." I couldn't agree with Mrs Ecker more. It's not only a modest investment, it's a minuscule investment in the needs of children.

This government should be committed to the development of the total child. If they were, they wouldn't be:

Cutting \$800 million from the Ministry of Education and Training;

Killing early childhood programs which will cost not only children in social development, but in the long term will cost Ontario taxpayers as they pay for the mistakes of this present government;

Killing special education subsidies so that those vulnerable children and their families cannot be provided with the resources needed is a mistake;

You have no meaningful job strategy for parents so that children won't feel inferior to those around them in the playground because daddy doesn't have a job;

You have no long-term strategy to provide children with the availability for total growth: social, emotional, physical and mental.

This announcement, although commendable on the part of the industry, signals that this government's direction, at best, is piecemeal when it comes to children. Children are our future. We must develop them to their potential. Government dollars and long-term strategies are necessary. Children get hungry not only in the morning, but at noon and at dinnertime, and children crave more than food. This government must learn and listen to the people of Ontario.

1400

#### FOREST FIREFIGHTING

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** I wish to reply to the statement by the Minister of Natural Resources. First, I would like to add to the minister's comments by congratulating and thanking the hardworking men and women of Ontario who are fighting these forest fires. They are dedicated, they are well-trained and they do a tremendous job. The seriousness of this situation, I believe, is expressed in the 230,000 hectares on fire, 61 fires; a serious problem.

I would say to the minister, after cutting 17 fire bases, after reducing the budget by \$4 million, having a long-term plan to totally close all fire bases, to have the ministry not retraining and recertifying people for fire service not now but a month before — I mean, we know when fire season happens. You're not prepared. You've bungled it. We are upset with this minister.

#### SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I'd like to respond briefly to the Premier's statement. While we appreciate

the involvement of the Grocery Industry Foundation Together, GIFT, and their contribution of \$3 million to this program, I think it's important that we recognize the context in which this announcement is being made. This is the government that decreased the income of welfare-dependent families by 21.6%. What is the reason kids are hungry? Why are more kids hungry now than when this government came to power?

The reason is because of the cuts that have been made to assistance that kids are dependent upon. The reason is that we have seen significant downsizing and increases in unemployment. The reason is that we've seen in the corporate sector similar downsizing and unemployment. People cannot afford to provide the daily needs of their kids, and that's why kids are going to school hungry. We recognize the fact that a child who goes to school hungry cannot concentrate, does not do well, does not learn, and that hurts that child and society generally.

This government has eliminated day care spaces. This government has made junior kindergarten optional; 26 boards in the province have cancelled junior kindergarten. This is a government that is cutting back on children, that is hurting children, and it's a government now that comes forward with a breakfast program that is supposed to make things right. A breakfast program will help some children, but what about the kids who will not be reached? What about the kids who not only need breakfast assistance but whose families need jobs in order to provide them with the everyday needs that every child has a right to in our society?

This government will not get away with saying, "We have turned our backs on children, and yes, when there are some that are hungry, we'll give them some breakfast, hopefully to assuage the anger that those children and their families feel about what's happening to them in this province."

#### FOREST FIREFIGHTING

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I want to respond to the statement made by the Minister of Natural Resources. I want to say to him that by the time this fire season ends in this province he will be in the same embarrassing position that his colleague the Minister of Transportation was in after the terrible winter that we had. In that case, the minister was trying to cut \$6 million from road maintenance, and I'll bet you he ended up spending two or three times more, given the winter we had. You will end up doing the same thing after the fire season in this province.

What's the reality? In your effort to try to cut \$4 million from the fire budget, you've laid off 20 crews, almost 60 people, who used to fight fires in the province of Ontario. You've closed 17 of the 19 fire bases in the province, 11 of them in northern Ontario, and the two that you kept open were in the riding of the finance minister and your own. I bet you those people now are not fighting fires in Haliburton; they're up fighting fires in northwestern and northeastern Ontario. Those bases should have been kept open, and you know it.

The situation also is that you are now bringing in people from other provinces to help fight fires, which is



a tradition in this province. At the same time, you have not recalled over 60 people in Ontario. Those 60 seasonal MNR staff are sitting at home right now without work because you laid them off because you were trying to save \$4 million. Shame on you for importing other people into this province to fight fires when we have people here who could be doing that job on behalf of the people of Ontario.

The closure of the bases is ridiculous. We had the case raised in Gogama by my colleague the member for Nickel Belt, who showed that those people were in the bush for over 24 hours without food and without radio contact because they couldn't raise the station in Timmins. They're in there fighting a fire without any backup, no one knows where they are, not fed, no one has an idea of what's going on. I'll bet you that's exactly the same thing that's happening right now with the 200 fires that are being fought right across this province. Maybe the minister should tell us how much timber is being lost, how many people are not going to work this summer because the timber we're trying to protect has been burned by these fires.

We have the highest praise for the people who work in firefighting in Ontario too. Maybe you should rehire them and let them do the job they're supposed to be doing.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** What we heard today from the Minister of Natural Resources is nothing more than hogwash. The fact of the matter is this government played Russian roulette with Ontario's forests and Ontario's natural resources, and now as they burn down you're caught. The fact of the matter is close to a year's supply of timber is burning down right now. That's going to cost thousands of jobs. The fact of the matter is tourist resorts are having to close. The fact of the matter is all kinds of communities are on evacuation watch. All this happened so you could give a tax cut to your wealthy friends.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### YOUNG OFFENDERS

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** I have a question for the Solicitor General today. I'd like to go back to the Elgin-Middlesex alleged young offender incident that happened on March 1.

In the life of a government, an accusation that 40 young people, shackled and being led off a bus, are allegedly beaten upon their arrival at another institution, is a very serious matter. It's an important and serious matter for a government to handle once such an unfortunate incident happens.

We know this happened on March 1. We know that on March 4 your deputy and the deputy of the Ministry of Community and Social Services were informed of this incident. Repeatedly, you have told us that while many of the people in your ministry, all the senior managers, knew of this incident, for three months you were kept in the dark.

Minister, I want to ask you: Once you were finally informed, and you say this wasn't until about June 4 or

5, a good three months afterwards, what instructions did you give your senior managers from then on, on how to handle this incident?

**Hon Bob Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** I want to go back. It seems to be the official opposition's tack with respect to this issue, and I'm quoting the member, just asking this question, with respect to the allegations surrounding the treatment of young offenders as they arrived at Elgin-Middlesex and the questions of the maltreatment: He says, "We know that it happened." I want to emphasize that on this side we very much believe in the presumption of innocence, that these are indeed allegations and we believe in due process.

With respect to tabling receipt of the child advocate's report, we responded very quickly in terms of bringing in the police and certainly asking ministry personnel to give us an update on what happened in terms of the communications process. Those were essentially the activities in terms of how we responded initially.

**Mr Ramsay:** Minister, it's obvious you didn't take charge of this case once you were finally informed three months later. Even at that late date, you still were not taking charge because in fact, from the series of questions I and others have asked in this House in the subsequent weeks, you keep standing up and sort of shrugging and saying, "Gee, I'm very unhappy with the performance of my officials."

I understand your colleague the Attorney General knew also back in early March, and in fact that the assistant deputy minister of the Ministry of Community and Social Services, Sue Herbert, who happens to be Judy Finlay's boss, called the AG's office to inform him of this incident. This is how serious this incident was in the government and I would imagine all senior officials in government would have been informed, except for you, I guess.

I'd like to know what happened to you. You were the bulldog here. You were the tough guy who was chomping at the bit for the last 10 years to take control of corrections and the police. I'm sure when you took control you said, "Hey, I'm the boss here and I want to run this department like no other person has ever done it." What happened to you when you got over there? Either your orders were countermanded by your officials or you've got a ministry out of control. How can you stand in your place and say you are the top cop and the chief jailer? Are you really in control over there, Minister?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** Again, I find it rather ironic that this particular member is continuing to raise this. He simply should revisit his own experiences in the ministry of corrections and certainly some of the problems he encountered with respect to the system itself. I think to try and paint this in some other manner defies the facts.

1410

The reality is that this was responded to in a positive sense in terms of how the young offenders were dealt with in terms of the child advocate expressing her concerns related to their arrival at Elgin-Middlesex. She was encouraged to pursue those concerns to see if there was any substance to the concerns, and she did that. She completed her investigation and gave the results of her investigation to the acting deputy at the time during a strike situation.



She has said time and time again that she is very pleased with the support and the response of the ministry during that interim period. During her investigation she received every possible support from the ministry officials, and she has no criticism with respect to how the ministry responded during that interim period. It's difficult for me to understand what the opposition thinks we're hiding here.

**Mr Ramsay:** Minister, from your refusing to answer these questions it's obvious you didn't give any orders, that basically you just washed your hands of this whole incident and sort of hoped your staff would take care of it. You have allowed all the evidence involved in this to be unprotected. All the senior staff involved — your personal staff, senior staff of the ministry, senior managers of the ministry — continue to have access to that evidence and continue to talk among themselves about the case. Because of your failure to properly handle the situation, you yourself have put yourself under suspicion.

You're the top cop. How can the OPP start to investigate their boss? I think you have two choices. You have an alternative before you: Either you step aside now so this investigation can be cleanly done, or you've got to call in the RCMP, with coresponsibility with the OPP, so that you yourself can be investigated with all the senior officials in that ministry. Minister, will you do the right thing and either step aside or call in the RCMP so we can have a full, independent investigation of your ministry?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I feel strongly we've handled this in a most responsible way.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** New question.

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** I too have a question for the Solicitor General and minister of corrections. Over the past number of years, it has been the shame of previous governments and legislatures in this province and across much of the rest of this country to find out what happened to young people in the custodial care of provincial government agencies. We are all, I think, shocked now to look back at the boys of St Vincent, the girls at Grandview, the victims at St John's at Alfred. It is a shocking indictment of what was allowed to happen by previous governments and previous legislatures as recently as the 1970s and 1980s.

With that as a backdrop, I come now to the minister, whom I've known for a long time, with whom I've served for 15 years in this Legislature. I've been listening carefully to the questions of my colleagues and the members of the New Democratic Party, and I've been particularly struck by what I'm being asked to believe by the Solicitor General, so let me just ask this question.

There was a serious incident allegedly involving the physical abuse of young people in a provincial facility in Ontario on or about March 1 of this year. Four days later, two senior government officials, the acting Deputy Minister of Correctional Services and the Deputy Minister of Community and Social Services, are told about serious allegations involving or suggesting the alleged physical abuse of young people, 40 in number.

My question is, are you really asking me to believe that you, as the responsible minister, heard nothing between March 4 and June 5, notwithstanding the fact that two of the most senior bureaucrats in your government were informed of these allegations on March 4?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** That's correct.

**Mr Conway:** I then have to, as an honourable member in this parliamentary place, accept what the minister is telling me, but unlike some members here, I too have been a minister. One thing that most impressed me about the mechanisms that were in place when I was in office was how instant was the capacity across the Ontario government to report significant incidents.

There is absolutely no doubt about, on the basis of my experience in government, what would have been the reaction once senior officials, most especially the senior official at the department of social services — I want to digress for a moment and tell the House that the Child and Family Services Act imposes a positive duty on any service provider or caregiver, the duty being that if you know or suspect that any young person in your care has been abused or has been threatened with abuse, you have a responsibility to report that immediately to the authorities. I just can't believe that the Deputy Minister of Community and Social Services, who administers the Child and Family Services Act, who would know that and would have heard these serious allegations about the abuse of young people in the custodial care of the government of Ontario, in the era after Grandview and after St Vincent, would not immediately have called the Premier's office and the minister's office to report these allegations.

Are you still telling me that you and your political staff heard nothing from those senior government officials for three months and that the mother of one of these alleged victims had repeatedly pleaded with your offices in Toronto and North Bay to investigate, that none of that had gotten through either?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** The reflections are upon the member's own experiences in government. To be fair, he has to put this in context as well. I'm not making apologies for the breakdown in the communications protocol, but there was a strike situation. This was a very unusual circumstance, the first ever experienced by an Ontario government. This was also done in the aftermath of a riot by young offenders at Bluewater, causing an estimated \$250,000 in damages. Because of the strike situation, because of the riot, a number of these young offenders had to be put into an adult institution. There was just no option at that point in time.

Looking at all that and putting it in the appropriate context, I hope the member can appreciate that it's not really comparable to his past experiences in government, going back a number of years, or mine. In terms of an objective, third-party, independent observer with respect to the ministry's response, I would suggest that he talk to the child advocate, as she has indicated from the outset that the opposition parties, for reasons best known to them, do not want to reflect on that, do not want to engage in a conversation or do not want to quote the child advocate's comments on the conduct of ministry officials during that period of time.

She indicated she had concerns. There had been a police investigation. We can't lose contact or lose sight of the fact that the OPP had been involved. The advocate is quite prepared to talk to you about that as well. She discussed her concerns with the OPP; she discussed them



with senior officials in government, the acting deputy and the deputy at Comsoc, and she was encouraged to pursue her concerns. At no point did she feel, along that process, that it was necessary for her to call in the police at that point in time. She concluded her investigation, turned over her findings to the deputy, who had returned from a leave of absence due to illness, and immediately the police were called in. From that perspective, I think the ministry has acted appropriately throughout this process.

**1420**  
**Mr Conway:** I repeat, let's none of us lose sight of these very serious allegations: 40 young people in the custodial care of the Ontario government are allegedly abused by their caretakers, by their service providers, call them what you will. I say very seriously to all members, recall the shame, the rage and the tears about St Vincent's and St Joseph's and St John's and Grandview. But that was on somebody else's watch.

We have before us today serious allegations and a stunning ministerial explanation of your ignorance about what was going on for days and weeks and months. I just can't believe that the Deputy Minister of Community and Social Services would know of these allegations on March 4 and no responsible minister would hear about that in the days after St Vincent until June 5.

The only way I can believe that, Minister, is that you have a rogue department out of your control and you're out of their loop. That is the only credible explanation I have for your story and that's not good enough in our system, where you and your colleagues on the treasury bench are responsible and accountable for the actions most especially of those in the care of young people in provincial institutions.

Are you telling us that at corrections you have a rogue department out of your control and that you are manifestly out of the loop of their ongoing decision-making, some of which may now involve the obstruction of justice?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I've indicated my unhappiness with respect to how certain people within the system have responded and I've broadened the internal investigation to take a look at some of those concerns.

In terms of the issue of treatment of young offenders, I'm not going to rely on the opinion of any member across the floor. I will rely on the opinion of the individual who's appointed to monitor child welfare in the system, and that's the child advocate. She has indicated very clearly time and time again, if anyone is prepared to listen, that she had no concerns with respect to the treatment of young offenders during that interim period.

Certainly there are serious allegations surrounding their treatment upon arrival at an adult institution. There is now a police investigation looking into that situation, and I'll await the results of that investigation.

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** My question is to the same minister about events that occurred after you knew; if we're to accept that you only knew on June 5, after you knew.

I've raised in this House on numerous occasions the issue of managers who may be the subject of an ongoing criminal investigation into alleged beatings of young offenders in the care of your ministry at Elgin-Middlesex

who were in that facility for many hours on the weekend of June 8. There have been allegations that shredding took place on that same weekend.

You admitted that those managers were gathering information and may have been photocopying information that you had requested, but you admitted yesterday that you were unaware that the managers were going into the institution on the weekend until after we mentioned the event here in the House.

You have also told us that the London police were called in on May 31 — three months later, as my colleague pointed out, but still called in. You may recall that on June 10, the day the London police actually began that investigation, I asked you about the existence of medical records which might be pertinent evidence necessary to substantiate allegations of abuse.

Today it has come to our attention that confidential medical records of young offenders at EMDC were photocopied by the very managers under concern who work at EMDC, on Friday, June 7, two days after you admit that you knew. These managers, who may be the subject of a criminal investigation, were in a position to interfere with those records, and those records are necessary to the investigation.

Minister, can you explain to us why, after you knew about this situation, a manager or managers would be duplicating confidential medical records of young offenders during an ongoing police investigation? Can you assure us that the confidentiality provisions of the Young Offenders Act and the Regulated Health Professions Act, laws that we all have to refer to, were followed and were not violated?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** We can have an allegation a day or two or three or four. In terms of the broader context, I've indicated on a number of occasions now that I have asked, through the deputy with respect to the internal investigation, that they look at the activities, the responses of managerial staff following receipt of the child advocate's report. That will encompass all of the activities surrounding allegations brought forward last week, brought forward today and perhaps brought forward every day from now to who knows when.

**Mrs Boyd:** It's quite evident that this minister knows nothing except what's brought up in this House. It's becoming more and more clear that he has absolutely no idea what's going on and cannot guarantee us that in fact the laws of this country and this province are being followed by the people in his ministry.

Minister, it has also been brought to our attention that on June 8 the staff at Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre were asked to fax confidential health care information on young offenders at EMDC to the Bluewater centre. Were you aware that this request was made by staff of your ministry after you knew about the allegations of this case, and considering all the allegations of wrongdoing and shredding of documents at Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre and at Bluewater Youth Centre, wouldn't you agree that this would be at the very least inappropriate and at the very worst interfering with the continuity of possible evidence in a very serious criminal case?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** My earlier response stands.

**Mrs Boyd:** You're quite wrong, Minister. In fact, none of your responses have been satisfactory to anyone. It is



my understanding that when the OPP arrived at Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre on June 10, I understand you said this to the press yesterday, that you'd asked them to secure the records of young offenders that might be evidence, that in fact records were not located in the filing cabinet in the health care unit where they would normally be stored. It is very important for us to recognize that when the OPP finally, after more than three months, went to secure evidence, the files they expected to find were not where they are normally kept. Minister, are you aware that these records were removed from where they would normally be stored, and how can you assure this House and the public that evidence has not been tampered with and that there has not been an obstruction of justice in this case?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** The head of the internal investigation, Inspector Christopherson, is looking at all of these concerns and it will all be determined in the finalization of his investigation, which hopefully will be at the end of this month.

#### NATIONAL UNITY

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I have a question to the Premier. As the Premier knows, his colleague the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs made a speech on June 14 on Canadian unity as part of the government's preparation for the upcoming first ministers' conference in Ottawa. The minister stated that, "Our government believes that we must once and for all bring clarity and precision to intergovernmental relations." This was subsequent of course to the Premier's own statement in New York in answer to questions, where he stated, "There is zilch, absolutely zero, chance of Quebec separating from Canada."

The Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs in her remarks stated, "The existence of a strong separatist sentiment in Quebec — I don't need to remind anyone here that Quebecers recently voted by the narrowest of margins to stay in Canada," and subsequently in answer to questions she said that intergovernmental affairs in Canada have "never been so fragile." She went on to say it would be "foolish to say otherwise." This is an example, it seems to us, of two ministers, the Premier, the head of the government, and the minister responsible for intergovernmental affairs, having basic disagreement, making contradictory remarks about the state of Canada and Quebec and Ontario's role within Canada.

1430

My question is simply this, to the Premier: Will he give clarity to the situation? Who speaks for Ontario with regard to these important matters? What is the Premier and the government's position vis-à-vis the role of Quebec and the unity of Canada?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I thought the minister's speech and ensuing comments were very appropriate, 100% with my line of thinking. It is fragile. The unity of Canada is fragile. I think we're all aware of that and concerned about this, that it is a serious matter, that it affects us, that it affects our image abroad, it affects interest rates, it affects the stability of the country, and that there is a substantial separatist sentiment within

the province of Quebec for separation. There is also a sentiment in Quebec for reconfederation as well.

So we share those views and those concerns. It's why I actually appointed a very senior member of our cabinet to be intergovernmental affairs, to have two people working on the file instead of one. It's why we've spent a considerable amount of time on the file in meeting with the Prime Minister, with the Premier of Quebec, with others in Quebec who are there.

If you're asking me to rationalize that with my statement in New York that in my opinion at the end of the day will I and the other premiers and 30 million Canadians be successful in keeping the country together, I believe we will. So does the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. So two different questions got two different answers which were all on the same wavelength. We're going to work hard. We appreciate the significance of the challenge ahead of us, and at the end of the day I'm 100% confident we're going to be successful.

**Mr Wildman:** All of us share the Premier's hope and desire that we be successful in ensuring the unity of our country. Having said that, however, I think it's a little facile for the Premier to be able to simply say that he was just talking about the end of the day and not take into account the effects of comments that he makes and that other leaders in this country make within Quebec as well as within our trading partners and in other parts of Canada.

The Premier's comments have been reported widely in the province of Quebec, much to the consternation of many federalists in that province. Can the Premier respond to his colleague's remark? Her explanation was that the Premier is "the kind of person who would just speak out openly and passionately from the heart." Surely, all of us may be passionate about this country, Mr Premier, but all of us also must recognize that we must weigh our statements very carefully before making them in terms of the effects that they may have within Quebec and across Canada on the very important debate about national unity, particularly as we just head into the first ministers' conference.

**Hon Mr Harris:** Let me say that I appreciate the member's personal commitment to this file and to this issue and concern for the country and his party's, and acknowledge that his party in opposition and in government has shared, I believe, that passion that I have for this country and that his leaders, both as Premier and in roles of opposition, have spoken out very passionately here in Ontario, across Canada and in the province of Quebec. Let me assure the member that I intend to do the very same.

We have a very thoughtful plan in place over what role Ontario should play in keeping this country together: getting our own economic affairs in order, assisting the federal government to do the same, work with other governments on those issues that are top of the mind to Canadians in Quebec and outside, of jobs, the economy, deficit, in those areas; as well, looking at reconfederating the country along the lines that many of us have been talking about — Quebec for 25 years; Quebec might say we're johnny-come-latelys — to looking at some of the devolution of powers to the provincial governments



where we believe government closer to the people can be more efficient and more effective.

My own view on this is that we can be successful by taking small steps, by achieving successes, by demonstrating to all Canadians, particularly to Quebeckers, that we can actually agree among ourselves to reconfederate this country along the lines similar to what many in Quebec have been asking for, both federalists and nationalists alike, to meet the aspirations of Quebec.

I tell you this: At the end of the day in many areas I think Mr Bouchard is going to find out, coming to the first ministers' conference — he tells me he is also going to come to Jasper to the premiers' conference; he's interested in Team Canada trade missions — when he gets to know the other provinces and the other premiers that in many ways other premiers go just as far, and maybe even will pass him, in some of the areas of responsibility they are seeking for provincial jurisdiction.

I believe very confidently as well that the aspirations of Quebeckers will be able to be seen within the type of changes I think we could make.

**Mr Wildman:** In attempting to bring some clarity to the provincial government's position going into the first ministers' conference, I'd like to remind the Premier of comments he made in Hansard in May 1994, in the debate in this House about calling for the federal government to treat Ontario fairly with regard to transfer payments. The then leader of the third party said, "The government of Ontario is reduced to whining and squabbling with other levels of government," when he was referring to the position of the then government that Ontario should be treated fairly.

I'd like to keep that in mind when we look at the statement made by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs on June 14 at the Park Plaza. The minister said in her speech that while Ontario has always supported the equalization program, as we all do, "what Ontario cannot support is the continued discrimination against our province in other program areas, the continued expectation that Ontarians should contribute a disproportionate share to programs that were intended to be equally beneficial to all Canadians."

That statement by your Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs is exactly the same position that was taken by our leader when he was Premier of this province with regard to equal treatment on federal-provincial programs and cost-sharing programs. Why was it whining when our government took that position and now it's the position of your government, apparently?

**Hon Mr Harris:** Let me say that there were a couple of occasions when, you will recall, I stood up in the Legislature and went and shook your Premier's hand. We stood up on trade sanctions against Quebec, where it was very unfair. I spoke out in support that we were entitled to our fair share of dollars for training and settlement costs for new immigrants coming into this country, that we were not getting our fair share back, that a new immigrant to Ontario was as entirely deserving of services as a new immigrant to Quebec or Atlantic Canada. I supported that. I encouraged you in that. I said, "Good for you." We are saying that now on training programs and unemployment.

However, when it came to the type of whining and finger-pointing and bellyaching that you did at everything the federal government did, then we took exception. That's not cooperative federalism. We support the federal government balancing its books, getting its affairs in order. We even support them reducing the transfers to the provinces, provided it's done fairly. When you were fair, we supported you and we said that. When you were just silly, nitpicking and bellyaching, we pointed that out too.

#### YOUNG OFFENDERS

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** My question is for the minister of justice. When precisely did you learn about the allegations at the Elgin-Middlesex correctional centre and by what means did you learn of those allegations?

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** I heard of those allegations in this place.

**Mr Conway:** Now the story widens. Notwithstanding the fact that on March 4 the deputy minister of social services and the acting deputy minister of correctional services are made aware of serious allegations about the alleged abuse of young people in the care of the Ontario government at the Elgin-Middlesex centre, we're asked to believe that neither of those senior government officials, who know about the requirements of the Child and Family Services Act, contacted any of the responsible ministers, including the minister of justice — incredible, absolutely incredible.

1440

My supplementary question to the minister of justice is this: Given that over three months elapsed between March 4 and early June, when the Solicitor General tells us he initiated some ministerial action in this respect, given the fact that a number of people who are clearly going to be the subject of the investigation had all kinds of time and opportunity to tamper with evidence, to cover their tracks, do you as the justice minister have any concern about the potential conflict of interest in which many in the department of correctional services now find themselves? Do you contemplate any action as the chief law officer for Ontario, given the gravity of these allegations, to address that serious potential conflict of interest?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** It's important for the member to understand and know that the Ministry of the Attorney General is not an investigatory body of criminal issues. That's quite clear. The Ministry of the Attorney General is a prosecutorial body; we're not a criminal investigatory body.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** New question, the third party.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** Let's just go through what we've got here. First of all, there's the riot at Bluewater on February 29 —

**Hon Mr Harnick:** To whom are you asking the question?

**Mrs Boyd:** Oh, to the Solicitor General, of course.

First we have the riot at Bluewater. Then we have the alleged beating of young offenders by managers at EMDC on the evening of February 29 or the day of



March 1. Then we have the alleged allegations of shredding of documents at EMDC long after you knew this had occurred. Then we have the superintendent's remarks, supposedly, around the shredding, which allegedly led to his dismissal as the superintendent and his reassignment into another part of the ministry. Then we hear that the report of the child advocate was too sensitive to release to the public because it might influence possible witnesses or might interfere with the police investigation. Now we have today's allegations around the duplication of medical records and the faxing of medical records which are confidential from one institution to another in the midst of these very serious investigations.

And you ask us, Minister, to believe there's no cover-up?

**Hon Bob Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** I've indicated on a number of occasions that I share the concerns with respect to some of the issues the member for London Centre has raised, related to the activities of managers and management personnel following receipt of the child advocate's report. I've indicated in an unequivocal way that I want to see this followed through. We've broadened the investigation: We've brought in an official from the Ministry of the Attorney General, a senior counsel, to assist in the investigation, to ensure that everything possible is looked at and reviewed in terms of the activities of managers.

I'm not sure I can expand upon that any further. I think we're acting in a most appropriate and responsible way.

**Mrs Boyd:** Minister, the issue here is that you are relying on the very people who kept this matter from you — if we are to believe you — to deal with it. We learned today that it was your assistant deputy minister for correctional services, third in command in your ministry after you and the deputy, who gave the child advocate report, the confidential child advocate report that couldn't be released, to George Simpson, the superintendent at Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre, who in turn gave it to his staff, at the very institution where these allegations occurred, to read. This is the same report you keep refusing to release. You know and you have said in this place that releasing it might jeopardize the ongoing police investigation if details were known to potential witnesses or to those under investigation. The managers and Mr Simpson himself may be the subject of ongoing investigations and it is alleged that your most senior official in the corrections side of your ministry has made this confidential report available to them.

We know the child advocate didn't give them this report. That's very clear. She has said so directly, and I share your confidence in her ability to tell us the truth. I ask you very directly, is your assistant deputy minister of correctional services responsible for allowing the superintendent and the managers at Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre to read the child advocate's report on the allegations that have been made against them?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** The key component of the question and the suggestion the member was making was that with respect to investigation of these allegations, I'm relying on personnel within the ministry who may indeed be part and parcel of the investigation. That is not the case.

There is an internal investigative unit, as I've indicated in the House on a number of occasions, headed by Inspector Christopherson — I'm not sure if the member wants to question the inspector's credentials or credibility or objectivity in approaching this — who is being assisted by a very capable team of investigators and also assisted by senior counsel from the Ministry of the Attorney General. Again, all these questions and concerns will be addressed by very competent, well-trained, objective investigators.

## ONTARIO WORKS

**Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton North):** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. I stand in this House today as a member proud to represent the riding of Halton North and to express our region's anticipation at being included in the government's first phase of workfare.

When we took office, there were three times as many people on welfare as 10 years before, and many more second- and third-generation welfare families. The people of Ontario told us it was time to break the cycle of dependency and to provide temporary emergency help when you need it, not to create a way of life. As promised, we are introducing a mandatory work-for-welfare program that requires all able-bodied welfare recipients to work or train for a job in exchange for benefits.

The opposition claims the new Ontario Works program is similar to the failed Jobs Ontario program. Minister, can you explain the differences between the employment supports that you announced this week and Jobs Ontario?

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services):** First of all, our government cancelled the Jobs Ontario program because it did not produce results. That's not my opinion or the government's opinion; that was the opinion of the Provincial Auditor, who found it to be a very poorly run program.

**Hon Bob Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** A boondoggle.

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** My colleague just mentioned it was a boondoggle, and that's probably an appropriate comment.

I think it's clear the old system was not helping people break the cycle of dependency, and that's where the difference is between our program and the Jobs Ontario program. The NDP Jobs Ontario program subsidized companies and businesses to hire people on welfare, and the incentive was free money. This particular type of program had been tried in other jurisdictions. I might point to the experience in Quebec, for example — I think it was called the Paillé program — wherein when the subsidy ran out, so did the jobs. In fact, the other experience in that particular program was that at the end of it a number of the companies who had participated in the program indicated that even though they kept on the people, they would have hired them anyway, but they thanked the government very much for the subsidy.

The real difference here is that the agencies that are now going to be in charge of getting people back into employment will have that degree of accountability, that element of results orientation we're looking for, that this fee for performance will only pay these agencies once



they're in a job. That's a better way for this government to go, as it has the accountability; it's accountable to the taxpayers as well, along with the recipients. The recipients expect, when they go through a program, that at the end of it they're going to have a job. The old system was very costly, and it had the result that you'd go through the program and at the end you'd have a better-trained unemployed person.

That in effect is the difference, and we certainly are looking for a made-in-Ontario solution for this province.

1450

**Mr Chudleigh:** Thank you for clarifying the differences for us. I'd also like to ask the minister how these job agencies are going to place welfare recipients into jobs.

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** Once again, I appreciate the opportunity to answer the question from the member for Halton, but I might add as well that it was certainly refreshing and good to see that the citizens and the council in Halton supported the workfare program and wanted to be part of the first phase.

Once again, if I could reiterate the fact that the real difference with this program is that the agencies will be paid once somebody is into a paid job. Part of this will be that there will be a \$200 retainer fee paid at the intake part of this program, and this of course is refundable, so if the agency does not place somebody into a job, that \$200 gets repaid back to the province.

There will be two other levels as well as the program progresses. After three months and after six months there will be further payments. In terms of the payments, once again it's results-oriented, so if we don't have results, the agencies do not get paid.

Clearly this type of program has worked before in other jurisdictions. I might point as well to the experience in Alberta. Certainly in Alberta, in similar types of employment programs, they've had a success rate of between 75% and 80%.

Clearly I think this will be a system and a program that will attain results for the people of Ontario.

#### FOREST FIREFIGHTING

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. Before I get into the question, let me preface my remarks by paying tribute to the extraordinary job being done in northwestern Ontario by all those who are battling the fires that are raging across the province.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** I didn't hear the question properly. Would you repeat it?

**Mr Gravelle:** I certainly want to pay tribute to the extraordinary job being done in northwestern Ontario by all those who are battling the fires that are raging across the region. This is an emergency situation and I recognize that everything possible should be done to win this battle.

However, I am concerned with the fact that you have called in firefighters in large numbers from out of the province — from BC, Alberta, Minnesota and Wisconsin — when there is no question that qualified and experienced firefighters from within the region and across the province are being told there is no work for them. We

know you laid off 60 firefighters, 20 three-man crews, earlier this year, yet your officials, as well as you personally, have publicly stated that all available trained personnel in the province were working and that is why fire crews from across the US had to be called in.

Certainly I have constituents who have gone into the fire centre, trained, experienced workers who have gone in and were told there was no work available because they had made cuts. Because MNR had made cuts, there were no more jobs available.

My first question to the minister is this: Why have you and your officials consistently made the claim that all available trained personnel were working, those who were there, when you know that is not the case?

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines):** I appreciate the question from my colleague. As I mentioned before, I think everyone agrees that firefighting is an extremely arduous and risky business and can be dangerous at times. The number one concern is safety to the crews and public safety. Therefore we ensure that all crews, before they become involved in the firefighting program, are properly trained.

As far as the international agreements, this is a traditional agreement that we've had with the United States and with other provinces. When they have a particularly severe situation, we send our crews over to their jurisdiction, and when we have an emergency, they will send crews and equipment to our jurisdiction.

As far as the training is concerned, we'll be offering updating and training courses for people in the next few weeks because, as you know, the first round are only allowed to stay in the working conditions for so many days and then we have to have a turnover. If he wants to get me the names of those people who are properly qualified who worked before, we'll take those.

**Mr Gravelle:** We understand how that compact works, and certainly it's only when all people have been called in and that is not the case, and we do have the names. They've gone into the fire centre consistently.

In 1995-96, we had one of the worst fire seasons in memory. Over 200,000 hectares burned. This year, we already have over 230,000 hectares burning. Yet, Minister, you decided to downsize your operation this year. You downsized, closing 17 of 45 fire bases, laying off 60 firefighters, cutting the budget by \$5 million. This is some voice for the north.

Now, today in your statement, you talk about recertifying firefighters with previous training now that the fires are raging. The barn door is closed or closing. There is an emergency. I think, quite frankly, it's shameful you would only now recognize that this work can be done by residents of this province, residents who really are qualified to do it right now.

Will you guarantee that if anyone with appropriate certification walks into the fire centre today, or a CEC office, they will be hired? These people are out there and they've been banging on the doors. Will you also take action to see that we are prepared next year and in the years to come with enough certified Ontario residents, who can certainly use the jobs, to fight the fires so we do not have to call in thousands of out-of-province residents to do the work next year?



**Hon Mr Hodgson:** As every member of this House knows, we're in a serious situation in northwestern Ontario. If they want to try to play politics just to say that somehow these fires were caused because of this, it's absolute nonsense. The reductions he talks about and the bases the third party refers to were 17. There are 28 bases still in effect in Ontario. There are mobile attack units. There are nine bases that are in gravel pits close to the fires.

Our firefighters are doing an admirable job. We have first nation firefighters who are working hard day and night, and we have companies that are working day and night. The northwest, where 181 of those fires are located, had three crew reductions on their total force from last year. We were prepared. The operation is working well. The results speak for themselves.

We've had an unusually dry spring, with the humidity factor, and we've had a lot of lightning strikes, and that's what's caused the fire. We're getting in place, if this continues for a long period of time, by offering retraining for people who have had the experience before in Ontario. But we are part of international agreements for emergencies such as this so that we will have the resources there to meet the emergency when it's required.

#### YOUNG OFFENDERS

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** My question is to the Solicitor General. Every day for the last two weeks we've been hearing more and more disturbing information about what went on at Elgin-Middlesex. The real issue here is accountability: Who is accountable for what happens to young people who are in the charge of your ministry, who is responsible when there are allegations of wrongdoing within that ministry, and how is that handled?

First of all, you tell us you didn't find out for three months, during which senior members of management within your ministry could have done anything to try to cover up what, if anything, did happen on the night of February 29 or the morning of March 1. Everything I've talked about generally here has been since you found out, your responsibility since you found out: your responsibility first to ensure those young people were in places of safety, your responsibility to secure records and to make sure possible evidence wasn't tampered with, your responsibility to make sure those in the chain of command were not those who were under any cloud by the investigations that were going on. You have done none of those things.

1500

Minister, how are we going to have any faith in the results of investigations when they come in, given the long, sad litany of events that have happened? There have been so many allegations of tampering with evidence, at least tampering with the continuity of that evidence, so many allegations that this evidence could have been changed, that stories could have been concocted because people were given information they ought not to have been given which you claim the public cannot have because it might prejudice the investigations. Minister, when these investigation reports finally come in, what do

you plan to do with them and how do you plan to rebuild the public confidence in the corrections system?

**Hon Bob Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** I've indicated that we'll take whatever action is appropriate and necessary, but I want to put on the record with respect to this interim period which members of the opposition want to talk about and point out again that there was an OPP investigation as well, and the advocate has indicated to me, and publicly as well, that she raised her concerns with respect to the treatment of young offenders on their arrival at Elgin-Middlesex with the OPP. So to suggest that there was no effort made in terms of her concerns, she certainly raised them with the OPP officers and then she raised them with the officials within both my ministry and the Ministry of Community and Social Services. She was encouraged to pursue those. The police had already been part of that process. To suggest that something inappropriate was done in that interim period is totally inaccurate.

**Mrs Boyd:** Minister, the child advocate has certainly said that the policy unit on young offenders within your ministry was of great assistance to her in trying to protect those young people. That is true.

You're quite right to say the OPP were investigating, and we know that the OPP are responsible to you. You are the Solicitor General as well as the minister of corrections, and that is why there is so much concern about what went on here. This has been going on for a long time. Evidence was not secured until June 10. There are allegations about tampering with that evidence over the weekend before, after it was mentioned in this House, after you knew about it.

I know what you're trying to do, Minister. You're telling us that these reports are going to come in at the end of the month, and we all know what happens at the end of the month. This place isn't here any more and you can't be questioned any more. You expect that everything can be swept under the carpet, as it has been many, many times in that ministry. All we're trying to do is to say to you is, you are accountable; it's your responsibility. These things have come out in a public forum, the way they didn't with Grandview, the way they didn't with St Joseph's and St John's. We are looking to you to show us how you are going to be sure that next year, years from now, we are not going to have the same kind of situation that we have had in the past in this province where young people were mistreated while they were in the care of the government, in the care of the correctional system.

Minister, what are you going to do to reassure the public? Will you at the very least agree that these investigative reports — all these reports — will be tabled and will be available for scrutiny? Will you at least guarantee us that?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I don't see where the opposition can perceive that I have any vested interest in, not pursuing this matter very vigorously. I certainly don't want, and I'm sure no member of this government wants, to see a repeat of what occurred in terms of the communication breakdown, the concerns surrounding the responses of management following the receipt of the child advocate's report. We intend to pursue this vigorously and we'll certainly make all of our activities as much as possible public knowledge.



In terms of the receipt of police reports and internal investigations, unless there are some questions surrounding privacy and any other of those kinds of questions which may arise, I'll be quite prepared to make them public, but I want to qualify that in terms of the privacy act and all of those other concerns that we have to address as members of government.

### WASTE DISPOSAL

**Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre):** My question is to the Minister of Environment and Energy. I understand that the federal government has banned the export of PCB waste in favour of Canadian disposal options which may be more expensive. The safe disposal of PCBs has been, and continues to be, an important issue for the people of Ontario, including the good people of Scarborough Centre. Can the minister tell the House what the Ontario government's position is on the export of PCBs?

**Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Environment and Energy):** I'm pleased to answer the question from my colleague. The responsibility for the transportation of hazardous waste such as PCB is a federal matter because it involves international movement.

In November the US EPA allowed the movement of PCBs to the United States for disposal. However, shortly after that the federal government instituted a ban to prevent it. This is a difficulty for us here in Ontario. We have about 116,000 tonnes of PCBs that need to be disposed of safely. They're at about 1,700 registered sites and the generator of that waste is responsible for making sure that material is safely disposed of. Generally, right now our options are either shipping that waste to Alberta to be disposed of there or landfilling it in Quebec.

Recently I had the opportunity to tour a site where we are experimenting with a new closed-loop system here in Ontario that may have tremendous possibilities for us with regard to disposing of this. The difficulty for us is that all options should be available for disposing of this. We believe it is far better to have this material dealt with in an environmentally sound manner and an economically responsible manner than it is to be sitting awaiting some sort of disposal.

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: Yesterday I rose in the House to make some comments that do not appear in Hansard for some reason. I would just give you a little bit of background and ask you to investigate.

We heard the heart-wrenching story yesterday of the Minister of Health where he said, "The honourable member knows full well that I spend all of my time — I don't have a family; I don't have time to see anyone else...." He spends all his time talking to doctors. We indicated that our caucus was prepared to chip in and buy the minister a puppy to perhaps relieve some of the pain. I indicated that publicly yesterday and it does not appear in Hansard. I wonder if you might find out the reasons for that, because we were attempting in opposition to be helpful to the minister.

**The Speaker:** We have two deferred votes agreed to. There will be a five-minute bell. Call in the members.

*The division bells rang from 1508 to 1513.*

### MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1996 LOI DE 1996 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LE MINISTÈRE DE L'AGRICULTURE, DE L'ALIMENTATION ET DES AFFAIRES RURALES

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 46, An Act to amend or revoke various statutes administered by or affecting the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and to enact other statutes administered by the Ministry / Projet de loi 46, Loi modifiant ou abrogeant diverses lois appliquées par le ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ou qui touchent ce ministère, et visant à édicter d'autres lois appliquées par le ministère.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Will the members take their seats, please. We are dealing with second reading of Bill 46 standing in the name of Mr Villeneuve. Those in favour will please rise one at a time.

#### Ayes

Baird, John R.	Harnick, Charles	Ross, Lillian
Barrett, Toby	Harris, Michael D.	Runciman, Bob
Bassett, Isabel	Hodgson, Chris	Sampson, Rob
Beaubien, Marcel	Hudak, Tim	Saunderson, William
Brown, Jim	Jackson, Cameron	Shea, Derwyn
Carr, Gary	Johns, Helen	Sheehan, Frank
Carroll, Jack	Johnson, Bert	Skarica, Toni
Chudleigh, Ted	Johnson, David	Smith, Bruce
Clement, Tony	Kells, Morley	Spina, Joseph
Danford, Harry	Klees, Frank	Sterling, Norman W.
DeFaria, Carl	Leach, Al	Stewart, R. Gary
Doyle, Ed	Leadston, Gary L.	Tascona, Joseph N.
Ecker, Janet	Marland, Margaret	Tsubouchi, David H.
Elliott, Brenda	Martiniuk, Gerry	Turnbull, David
Fisher, Barbara	Maves, Bart	Vankoughnet, Bill
Ford, Douglas B.	Munro, Julia	Villeneuve, Noble
Fox, Gary	Mushinski, Marilyn	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Froese, Tom	Newman, Dan	Witmer, Elizabeth
Galt, Doug	O'Toole, John	Wood, Bob
Grimmett, Bill	Palladini, Al	Young, Terence H.
Guzzo, Garry J.	Preston, Peter	
Hardeman, Ernie	Rollins, E.J. Douglas	

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one at a time.

#### Nays

Bartolucci, Rick	Cooke, David S.	Martel, Shelley
Bisson, Gilles	Crozier, Bruce	Martin, Tony
Boyd, Marion	Curling, Alvin	Miclash, Frank
Bradley, James J.	Grandmaitre, Bernard	Morin, Gilles E.
Brown, Michael A.	Gravelle, Michael	Phillips, Gerry
Caplan, Elinor	Hoy, Pat	Pouliot, Gilles
Christopherson, David	Kormos, Peter	Pupatello, Sandra
Churley, Marilyn	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ramsay, David
Cleary, John C.	Lankin, Frances	Silipo, Tony
Colle, Mike	Laughren, Floyd	Wildman, Bud
Conway, Sean G.	Marchese, Rosario	Wood, Len



**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 64; the nays are 33.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading? Agreed. So ordered.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The official opposition wanted that bill to go to committee of the whole in order to present a couple of amendments. Is there consent to go to committee of the whole on that?

**The Speaker:** I ask the House if there's consent for it to go to committee of the whole? Agreed.

# MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1996

## LOI DE 1996 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LE MINISTÈRE DES RICHESSES NATURELLES

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 36, An Act to amend certain acts administered by the Ministry of Natural Resources / Projet de loi 36, Loi modifiant certaines lois appliquées par le ministère des Richesses naturelles.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** The next item of business is second reading of Bill 36, standing in the name of Mr Hodgson. Call in the members.

*The division bells rang from 1517 to 1522.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour of second reading will please rise one at a time.

### Ayes

Baird, John R.	Hardeman, Ernie	Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Barrett, Toby	Harnick, Charles	Ross, Lillian
Bassett, Isabel	Harris, Michael D.	Runciman, Bob
Beaubien, Marcel	Hodgson, Chris	Sampson, Rob
Boushy, Dave	Hudak, Tim	Shea, Derwyn
Brown, Jim	Jackson, Cameron	Sheehan, Frank
Carr, Gary	Johns, Helen	Skarica, Toni
Carroll, Jack	Johnson, Bert	Smith, Bruce
Chudleigh, Ted	Johnson, David	Spina, Joseph
Clement, Tony	Kells, Morley	Sterling, Norman W.
Danford, Harry	Klees, Frank	Stewart, R. Gary
DeFaria, Carl	Leach, Al	Tascona, Joseph N.
Doyle, Ed	Leadston, Gary L.	Tsubouchi, David H.
Ecker, Janet	Marland, Margaret	Turnbull, David
Elliott, Brenda	Martiniuk, Gerry	Vankoughnet, Bill
Fisher, Barbara	Maves, Bart	Villeneuve, Noble
Ford, Douglas B.	Munro, Julia	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Fox, Gary	Mushinski, Marilyn	Wilson, Jim
Froese, Tom	Newman, Dan	Witmer, Elizabeth
Galt, Doug	O'Toole, John	Wood, Bob
Grimmett, Bill	Palladini, Al	Young, Terence H.
Guzzo, Garry J.	Preston, Peter	

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one at a time.

### Nays

Bartolucci, Rick	Cooke, David S.	Martel, Shelley
Bisson, Gilles	Crozier, Bruce	Martin, Tony
Boyd, Marion	Curling, Alvin	Miclash, Frank

Bradley, James J.	Grandmaître, Bernard	Morin, Gilles E.
Brown, Michael A.	Gravelle, Michael	Phillips, Gerry
Caplan, Elinor	Hoy, Pat	Pouliot, Gilles
Christopherson, David	Kormos, Peter	Pupatello, Sandra
Churley, Marilyn	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ramsay, David
Cleary, John C.	Lankin, Frances	Silipo, Tony
Colle, Mike	Laughren, Floyd	Wildman, Bud
Conway, Sean G.	Marchese, Rosario	Wood, Len

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 65; the nays are 33.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

**Interjections:** No, committee of the whole House.

**The Speaker:** Agreed? Agreed.

## EDUCATION AMENDMENT ACT, 1996

### LOI DE 1996 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'ÉDUCATION

Bill 34, An Act to amend the Education Act / Projet de loi 34, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation.

**Mr David Turnbull (York Mills):** Mr Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent that the debate was deemed to have been concluded and the request for the recorded vote deemed to have been made on Bill 34, An Act to amend the Education Act, and that the vote will follow immediately.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Do we have agreement on that? Agreed.

Call in the members. Same vote?

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** No.

**The Speaker:** I hear a no. A five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1527 to 1532.*

**The Speaker:** We're dealing with Bill 34, third reading, standing in the name of Mr Snobelen. Those in favour will rise one at a time.

### Ayes

Baird, John R.	Harnick, Charles	Ross, Lillian
Barrett, Toby	Harris, Michael D.	Runciman, Bob
Bassett, Isabel	Hodgson, Chris	Sampson, Rob
Beaubien, Marcel	Hudak, Tim	Saunderson, William
Boushy, Dave	Jackson, Cameron	Shea, Derwyn
Brown, Jim	Johns, Helen	Sheehan, Frank
Carr, Gary	Johnson, Bert	Skarica, Toni
Carroll, Jack	Johnson, David	Smith, Bruce
Chudleigh, Ted	Kells, Morley	Spina, Joseph
Clement, Tony	Klees, Frank	Sterling, Norman W.
Danford, Harry	Leach, Al	Stewart, R. Gary
DeFaria, Carl	Leadston, Gary L.	Stockwell, Chris
Doyle, Ed	Marland, Margaret	Tascona, Joseph N.
Ecker, Janet	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tsubouchi, David H.
Elliott, Brenda	Maves, Bart	Turnbull, David
Fisher, Barbara	Munro, Julia	Vankoughnet, Bill
Ford, Douglas B.	Mushinski, Marilyn	Villeneuve, Noble
Fox, Gary	Newman, Dan	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Froese, Tom	O'Toole, John	Wilson, Jim
Galt, Doug	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Witmer, Elizabeth
Grimmett, Bill	Palladini, Al	Wood, Bob
Guzzo, Garry J.	Preston, Peter	Young, Terence H.
Hardeman, Ernie	Rollins, E.J. Douglas	



**The Speaker:** All those opposed will rise one at a time until their name is called.

#### Nays

Bartolucci, Rick	Cooke, David S.	Martin, Tony
Bisson, Gilles	Crozier, Bruce	Miclash, Frank
Boyd, Marion	Curling, Alvin	Morin, Gilles E.
Bradley, James J.	Grandmaître, Bernard	Phillips, Gerry
Brown, Michael A.	Gravelle, Michael	Pouliot, Gilles
Caplan, Elinor	Hoy, Pat	Pupatello, Sandra
Christopherson, David	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ramsay, David
Churley, Marilyn	Lankin, Frances	Silipo, Tony
Cleary, John C.	Laughren, Floyd	Wildman, Bud
Colle, Mike	Marchese, Rosario	Wood, Len
Conway, Sean G.	Martel, Shelley	

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 68; the nays are 32.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

## PETITIONS

### ADULT EDUCATION

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North):** To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Education Act of Ontario and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantee equal access to secondary school education for all students regardless of age; and

"Whereas Bill 34 clearly discriminates against students over the age of 20; and

"Whereas factors in Metropolitan Toronto such as years of major economic dislocation, escalating social problems and consistently high levels of immigration have created a tremendous need and demand for quality effective adult education programs; and

"Whereas public adult education programs in Metro Toronto are a proven success, with 83% of students moving directly into employment or further education after completing short-term programs of five months to one year; and

"Whereas Bill 34 clearly threatens these programs;

"We, the undersigned, urge the provincial assembly to instruct the government to withdraw Bill 34, the Education Amendment Act, because it discriminates against adult students on the basis of age."

I put my signature to this. There are many people in my constituency who have also done so.

### RENT REGULATION

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** I have a number of petitions with signatures of over 2,000 to 3,000 individuals from around the city of Toronto addressed to Premier Mike Harris and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Al Leach, and the members of the provincial Legislature and it reads as follows:

"Whereas to abolish rent controls in favour of a market system would be disastrous for tenants and give further power and allow unnecessary profits for landlords;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario to support universal and mandatory rent controls which reflect a fair balance between the ability of tenants to pay and the necessity and cost of supplying well-maintained and secure housing."

I sign that petition with pleasure.

## COMMERCE INTERPROVINCIAL

**M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott et Russell) :** J'ai une pétition signée par une centaine de travailleurs de la construction en Ontario et à Prescott et Russell.

«Attendu que le taux de sans-emploi au sein de l'industrie de la construction est très élevé dans toute la vallée de l'Outaouais, notamment dans la région d'Ottawa-Carleton où, selon l'IBEW, Local 586, 43 % des travailleurs syndiqués de différents métiers reliés à la construction sont au chômage ;

«Attendu que plusieurs emplois sur les chantiers de construction de l'Ontario sont comblés par des travailleurs du Québec ;

«Attendu que les travailleurs et les entrepreneurs en construction de l'Ontario font face à de nombreuses règles lorsqu'ils veulent travailler au Québec ou encore obtenir des contrats au Québec ;

«Attendu que les négociations entre l'Ontario et le Québec au cours des 20 dernières années afin d'abolir les barrières interprovinciales n'ont pas permis d'établir une parité au sein des deux provinces ;

«Nous, soussignés, adressons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario la pétition suivante :

«Que le projet de loi sur la main-d'oeuvre de la construction du Québec déposé à l'Assemblée législative le 4 juin 1996 par le député de Prescott et Russell, Jean-Marc Lalonde, qui contribuera à créer de l'emploi et à protéger l'industrie de la construction en Ontario soit adopté par l'Assemblée.»

Je signe cette pétition.

1540

## TAX REDUCTION

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** I have here a petition that was forwarded to me from the Roman Catholic diocese of London, the first signatory being Bishop Sherlock. It is a petition to the Legislature of Ontario.

"We, the undersigned, request that the Legislature of Ontario not approve any tax cuts until the causes of poverty and unemployment in Ontario are dealt with effectively and until the province's debt and deficit are paid down."

I am proud to add my signature to this petition.

## COURTCLIFFE PARK

**Mr Toni Skarica (Wentworth North):** I have a petition; it's actually the second one. It reads as follows, in part:

"We, the residents of Courtcliffe Park in the town of Flamborough, demand a public inquiry into the financial management of Courtcliffe Park by the provincial court-appointed receiver Deloitte and Touche from May 1992



to November 1995, in particular the collection of property taxes from the residents of Courtcliffe Park that were not paid to the town of Flamborough, which has led to the possible eviction of more than 200 residents."

This is the second petition, one with 200 signatures which was filed last week.

### SKILLS TRAINING

**Mrs Sandra Papatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** I'm happy to support the petition going forward with hundreds of names on it from my riding.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas chronic underfunding of skill training has resulted in program cuts at St Clair College;

"Whereas apprentices and non-regulated trades of CNC machinists, draftspersons, industrial pipefitters, industrial machine control and electricians may be in jeopardy of losing their training;

"Whereas the Premier of Ontario has stated that teachers and classes will not be cancelled under restructuring;

"Therefore be it resolved that we, the apprentices and concerned individuals, request that the Premier and the Minister of Labour (a) restore funding to the non-regulated trades, (b) guarantee that no apprentice will lose their apprenticeship and (c) guarantee continuity of skill training for the province of Ontario."

I'm happy to add my signature to this petition.

### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I continue to receive petitions from workers concerned about this government's continuing attack on workplace health and safety. These petitions come from the Service Employees International Union Local 532 in my home town of Hamilton.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas it is vital that occupational health and safety services provided to workers be conducted by organizations in which workers have faith; and

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers have provided such services on behalf of workers for many years; and

"Whereas the centre and clinics have made a significant contribution to improvements in workplace health and safety and the reduction of injuries, illnesses and death caused by work;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode the structure, services or funding of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers.

"Further, we, the undersigned, demand that education and training of Ontario workers continue in its present form through the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and that professional and technical expertise and advice continue to be provided through the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers."

As I support this petition, I affix my signature also.

### NURSING STAFF

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole):** I have a petition from the staff on 5A of the Fell building, the neurosurgery nurses, Western Division, the Toronto Hospital, and the petition says:

"Whereas the mission statement of the Toronto Hospital says 'The Toronto Hospital will provide exemplary patient care and foster excellence in health care delivery, research and teaching';

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, are strongly opposed to the removal of registered nurses from the hospital wards and replacing them with registered practical nurses and unregulated health workers."

This is signed by the registered nurses who are members of the neurosurgery team at the Western Division of the Toronto Hospital. I submit this to the Legislature and I share their concerns.

### COMMON SENSE REVOLUTION

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I have a petition that's signed by 27 constituents in the riding of Sudbury East. It reads as follows:

"Whereas Mike Harris said on May 30, 1995, 'If I don't live up to anything that I have promised to do and committed to do, I will resign;' and

"Whereas Mike Harris promised on May 3, 1995, 'No cuts to health care spending,' but in his November 29 economic statement we see \$1.3 billion, or 18%, in cuts to hospital spending over the next three years and a further \$225 million in cuts from the health care budget; and

"Whereas Mike Harris has clearly broken his promise to defend health care cuts in funding; and

"Whereas Mike Harris promised in the Common Sense Revolution that, 'This plan will create more than 725,000 new jobs,' but in his November 29 economic statement we see a prediction of only 253,000 jobs created over the next three years and an unemployment rate of 8.6% in two years, which is the same as it is today; and

"Whereas Mike Harris has clearly broken his promise to create significant jobs in this province; and

"Whereas Mike Harris promised in the Common Sense Revolution that, 'Aid for seniors and the disabled will not be cut,' but in his November 29 economic statement Mike Harris is cutting the Ontario drug benefit plan and making seniors and the vulnerable pay for their drugs; and

"Whereas Mike Harris has clearly broken his promise to seniors and the disabled,

"We, the undersigned, demand that Mike Harris keep his word and resign immediately."

I have affixed my signature to the petition and I agree entirely with my constituents.

### TRANSITION HOUSE

**Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent):** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Transition House in Chatham has provided emergency shelter to troubled or abused youth as well as support, counselling and life skills training since 1990, and operating on a five-year budget of \$865,000 they



have counselled over 400 youth and served over 20,000 meals;

"Whereas the city of Chatham and the county of Kent rely on Transition House to meet the needs of the troubled youth and there is no other facility to serve the needs of the community; and

"Whereas the principles of discipline, self-help and a regimented environment at Transition House have combined with the counselling and support to provide youth with the motivation and self-respect to return to school or find jobs; and

"Whereas it has been shown that massive cuts to health services, school systems and social services have a definite impact on statistics of children and youth in crisis; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has cut its direct funding to Transition House by almost \$48,000 annually and placed the existence of Transition House in jeopardy;

"Be it therefore resolved that we, the undersigned, urge the government of Ontario to reverse its decision to cut the funding of Transition House in Chatham and in Kent."

I affix my signature to this petition.

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** I bring to this assembly a petition of hundreds of names, literally, to add to the hundreds of names already presented on this issue from the United Steelworkers of America in Sault Ste Marie, Local 2251. It goes like this:

"Whereas it is vital that occupational health and safety services provided to workers be conducted by organizations in which workers have faith; and

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers have provided such services on behalf of workers for many years; and

"Whereas the centre and clinics have made a significant contribution to improvements in workplace health and safety and the reduction of injuries, illnesses and deaths caused by work;

"We, the undersigned, from United Steelworkers 2251, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode the structure, services or funding of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers.

"Further, we, the undersigned, from Local 2251, United Steelworkers, demand that the education and training of Ontario workers continue in its present form through the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and that professional and technical expertise and advice continue to be provided through the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers."

I sign my name to this petition.

1550

#### COLLEGE OF TEACHERS

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I have a petition that reads as follows, regarding Bill 31, an act to establish the Ontario College of Teachers, a bill which has not yet been proclaimed:

"Whereas the Ontario Legislature is currently debating Bill 31, An Act to establish the Ontario College of Teachers and to make related amendments to certain statutes; and

"Whereas section 4 of this legislation sets up the college's governing council in a manner designed to prevent ordinary teachers from forming a majority; and

"Whereas section 12 gives the Minister of Education draconian powers to override the will of the elected governing council; and

"Whereas sections 33 and 34 give college investigators the right to enter teachers' workplaces and homes, by force if necessary, to search for 'something relevant' to charges against teachers; and

"Whereas section 28 gives the college's discipline committee power to revoke teacher certification and assess fines of up to \$5,000 plus legal costs; and

"Whereas under section 52 a teacher unjustly accused of professional incompetence would have no right to undertake legal action against the college even if it was shown to have neglected or defaulted in the performance of its duties; and

"Whereas section 53 makes Ontario teachers retroactively responsible for all expenses incurred in establishing the college since April 1, 1994, plus interest; and

"Whereas this bill contains many other provisions too numerous to mention which are an insult to the professionalism of the Ontario teacher, who will be forced without consent to pay for the College of Teachers;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the government of Ontario to withdraw Bill 31 and to undertake a sincere process of consultation with Ontario teachers prior to reintroduction of another such bill."

I affix my name to this petition as I'm in agreement with its contents.

#### NON-PROFIT HOUSING

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have a petition from the Guise Street Housing Co-op in my riding of Hamilton Centre, which is located at 2 Guise Street. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario government has clearly indicated that it 'wants to get out of the housing business'; and

"Whereas the Ontario government is reviewing the legal contracts and budgets of every co-op housing project in the province; and

"Whereas the Ontario government has announced plans to make huge cuts to co-op and non-profit housing funding; and

"Whereas the Ontario government wants to replace affordable housing with subsidies to private landlords; and

"Whereas co-op housing is a proven success in providing affordable homes owned and managed by the people who live in them; and

"Whereas the actions of the Ontario government threaten to destroy stable, well-maintained communities which have been built over the last quarter of a century and the investment all Ontarians have made in this type of affordable social housing;



"We request that the Ontario government sit down with the co-op housing sector to negotiate a deal which will ensure the long-term financial viability of housing co-ops and the continuance of rent-geared-to-income assistance upon which thousands of co-op members depend, and which will promote greater responsibility for administration by the co-op housing sector and less interference by the government in the day-to-day operations of housing co-ops."

As I support this petition, I affix my signature also.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Mr Martin from the standing committee on government agencies presented the committee's 13th report.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Does the member wish to make a statement?

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** No, I don't wish to make a speech of any sort.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Pursuant to standing order 106(g)(11), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Mr Barrett from the standing committee on regulations and private bills presented the following report and moved its adoption:

Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill Pr58, An Act respecting the Lions Foundation of Canada.

Your committee begs to report the following bill with amendment:

Bill Pr61, An Act respecting the Town of Richmond Hill.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT, 1996

#### LOI DE 1996 MODIFIANT LE CODE DE LA ROUTE

Mr Hoy moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 78, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act / Projet de loi 78, Loi modifiant le Code de la route.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent):** This bill attempts to correct a long-standing problem in Ontario of identifying the drivers of vehicles that endanger children boarding or leaving school buses. The bill imposes liability on the owner of a vehicle that fails to stop for a school bus with its lights flashing.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### AGGREGATE AND PETROLEUM RESOURCES STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1996

#### LOI DE 1996 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LES RESSOURCES EN AGRÉGATS ET LES RICHESSES PÉTROLIÈRES

Mr Hodgson moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 52, An Act to promote resource development, conservation and environmental protection through the streamlining of regulatory processes and the enhancement of compliance measures in the Aggregate and Petroleum Industries / Projet de loi 52, Loi visant à promouvoir la mise en valeur des ressources, la conservation ainsi que la protection de l'environnement en simplifiant les processus de réglementation et en renforçant les mesures de conformité dans l'industrie pétrolière et l'industrie des agrégats.

**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines):** It's my privilege to rise today to introduce Bill 52 for second reading. When passed, Bill 52, the Aggregate and Petroleum Resources Statute Law Amendment Act, will amend four existing statutes, the Aggregate Resources Act, the Petroleum Resources Act, the Mining Act and the Ontario Energy Board Act.

These amendments will restructure the aggregate, petroleum and salt-solution mining and brine programs of the Ministry of Natural Resources to make industry more accountable for meeting provincial environmental standards. In addition, these amendments will result in permanent savings of \$3.5 million annually for the taxpayers of Ontario.

As members are aware, our government has pledged to change the way government works by providing better services at a price the taxpayers can afford. We're determined to stimulate economic growth and job creation by eliminating red tape and by removing barriers to business sector investment.

The Ministry of Natural Resources has been actively supporting the government's ongoing efforts to achieve these commitments. We have been working with the Red Tape Review Commission to remove bureaucratic inefficiencies from our regulations and practices that have an impact on economic growth.

Through the revised acts resulting from today's bill, we will be implementing our non-renewable resources business plan to change the way we regulate the aggregate, petroleum and brine industries in Ontario. We will shift more responsibility for direct program delivery to the industry, making it more accountable for meeting provincial environmental standards. The Ministry of Natural Resources will then be able to concentrate on our core business of policy development, the setting and enforcement of standards, and approvals of permits and licences.

This new approach to the way we do business will remove the complex, detailed legislation and regulations that currently administer the aggregate, petroleum and



brine industries. It will put into place new, streamlined legislation and regulations, backed by detailed technical standards that are understandable and enforceable.

These standards will be developed in consultation with key stakeholders and will be adopted by regulation. They will be tailored to the industries and the people working directly in the field, who will be accountable for compliance. As well, the standards will be more adaptable to the changing improvements in technology.

The changes proposed in this bill will in no way lessen the environmental safety programs present in the current legislation, nor will they open the door for industry to do what it wants. Indeed, with the new, clearly defined, detailed and enforceable technical standards, these industries will be better able to understand and accept their responsibilities, making them more accountable for their actions.

Compliance with new standards will be less complicated than is currently the case. The ministry will be responsible for auditing operations for compliance with legislation and standards, and for enforcement in the event of non-compliance.

The revised acts will provide stronger enforcement tools, including increased fines, longer licence suspensions and a longer time period to initiate prosecutions. Companies, agencies and individuals will be fully liable for their actions.

**1600**

I would now like to outline the specific changes for each of the affected industries.

The aggregate industry is one of the most important industries in Ontario. It provides an indispensable commodity that is the foundation for a \$30-billion construction industry. The aggregate industry employs some 7,000 people directly and some 34,000 people indirectly in services such as transportation and equipment.

By cutting the red tape that currently regulates the aggregate industry in Ontario, we'll be creating a business climate that will stimulate investment and create jobs. We'll be working with the industry and the key stakeholders to develop new technical standards governing the industry's activities, maintaining Ontario's international leadership role in aggregate resources management.

With these new standards, we'll be developing a compliance partnership with the industry. Operators will be responsible for day-to-day site inspections and for monitoring to ensure there is compliance with the legislation, regulations and standards. Full, detailed compliance reports will be submitted annually to the ministry, and operators will be held legally accountable for the accuracy of these reports. To ensure that the reports are properly submitted, ministry inspectors will conduct random audits.

We will also be making changes in the collection of fees and security deposits required from aggregate operators. Under the current legislation, the Ministry of Natural Resources is responsible for the collection and disbursement of moneys collected from these operators. We are essentially acting as bankers for the industry. The existing system is inefficient, ineffective and difficult to understand.

Under the amendments to the existing legislation, we'll be setting up a trust fund administered by a private corporation similar to the one set up under the Crown Forest Sustainability Act.

The Minister of Natural Resources will appoint trustees who will be responsible for collecting and disbursing annual licence and wayside fees; administering the abandoned pits and quarries rehabilitation fund; administering a new pooled trust for the rehabilitation of lands where operators have had their licences revoked or have gone bankrupt; and funding research into aggregate resources management, including rehabilitation research.

The Aggregate Producers' Association of Ontario has agreed to take on the responsibility for the administration and delivery of the rehabilitation programs stemming from the abandoned pits and quarries rehabilitation fund.

I'd now like to turn to the changes we will be making to the regulation of the petroleum and brine industries. These are four industries dealing with hydrocarbon and brine products: the crude oil and natural gas exploration and production industry; the natural gas storage industry; the brine or salt-solution mining industry; and the hydrocarbon storage industry.

Although not nearly as large as the industry in Alberta, Ontario's oil and gas production still employs 1,100 workers directly and another 3,500 indirectly. The salt-solution mining industry employs 1,200 directly and, along with the natural gas storage industry and hydrocarbon storage industry, provides for value added jobs for more than 30,000 people.

Similar to the changes proposed for the aggregate industry, legislation governing the petroleum and brine industries will be streamlined and simplified. As well, operational standards will be developed with the industry and other key stakeholders to provide detailed technical guidelines. These will be similar to the current CSA standard for the storage of hydrocarbon in underground foundations.

To guarantee that operations comply with Ontario's environmental and safety regulations, the Ministry of Natural Resources will continue to do field site inspections. In addition, private inspectors, certified by the ministry, will also perform field site examinations.

Inspectors will have strengthened powers, including the authority to order the plugging of a well. This enhanced enforcement will be complemented by increased fines reaching a maximum of \$500,000, up from the current \$10,000. As well, any profits accrued as a result of the violations will be added to the fines. To ensure that all operators comply with the regulations, we will also extend the time period for initiating prosecution.

A new licensing system will replace the current well permit system, which only addresses the drilling portion of operations. Under the provisions in this bill, a new life-cycle well licence will be established. It will require adherence to the operational standards for the life of a well, from the initial drilling to the final plugging and abandonment.

This new licence will cover all activities, including drilling, production, maintenance and changes in the status or purpose of the well. It will eliminate the need for annual production and rig licences and special brine well permits currently required under the Mining Act.



As a result of the restructuring of the Ministry of Natural Resources resulting from the implementation of the non-renewable resources business plan, it will no longer be providing technical and research services to the petroleum industry, as these services do not fall under our core business.

Provisions in this bill will also set up a new trust account funded by the industry to operate the core and chip library currently run by the ministry. In addition, this trust account will finance research and information services for the industry and academic institutions.

Amendments to the current statutes contained in the Aggregate and Petroleum Resources Statute Law Amendment Act, 1996, which is being introduced for second reading today, will make the aggregate, petroleum and brine industries more accountable for meeting Ontario's environmental standards. As well, these measures are consistent with our government's determination to create jobs, cut red tape and streamline delivery of government services.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Questions or comments? Further debate?

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to make some comments, however brief, about the Aggregate and Petroleum Resources Statute Law Amendment Act.

The first thing is that I appreciate the ministry providing us with a briefing on this bill. We appreciated that very much. Having said that, I might say we have some concerns.

We have to understand, I think, that the aggregate business in Ontario is an important component of our economy. Some members of this Legislature may not know, but it is a fact that governments of one shape or another purchase 60% of the product that is provided by the aggregate industry. So the public has a huge stake in this industry and the cost of this industry and in the availability of the material from this industry.

We also know that aggregate pits or quarries are not what you would call universally acceptable in all neighbourhoods and they cause some concern among the citizens of this province that they are operated in a safe, environmentally friendly manner. I think that goes almost without saying.

As I come to this act, I know that my friends in the New Democratic Party will be very supportive of it, because of course it mirrors very closely the Crown Forest Sustainability Act that was presented by the New Democrats when they were the government, and therefore, probably the Liberal Party will be the only ones presenting much opposition to the idea of this self-regulation of an industry in the resource sector. That's maybe not totally correct, I see by the —

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr Michael Brown:** Thank you for those comments, but I think what concerns us more than anything is the monitoring of this act. I think the idea of a trust is going to be applauded. I think the idea of a trust will work well for the industry and well for the people of Ontario. Members should also recognize that this is not a terribly old act. This act was amended last in 1989 or 1990 and

therefore is not what you would call an outdated piece of legislation, so the idea in the introduction of a section that provides for a trust — it's a more sensible way, in our view, of dealing with the moneys that need to flow in the industry to make sure that the rehabilitation and the permitting are done in a reasonable fashion.

We also believe that the self-monitoring by the particular businesses could work very well. We are aware that three pilot projects have been successfully completed and have worked in the interests of Ontario. I don't think anybody would disagree with that, but we have some concerns when it comes to the monitoring of the self-monitoring. Certainly, the public has a strong interest in this bill for a variety of reasons — environmental, economic, governmental — and we have a strong interest in making sure the government continues to be a player in the regulation of this business. The only way to do that is to see that the Ministry of Natural Resources has the ability — which means people, it means offices, it means cars and trucks — to monitor this particular industry in a meaningful way.

1610

Frankly, we are very suspicious that the ministry will not have the resources to do that. Why would I say that? I would say that because we have to put this bill in the context of what's going on in the Ministry of Natural Resources today. The Ministry of Natural Resources has lost and will lose 45% of its employees — 45%. They will lose, by next year, half — 50% — of their funding. So I think members have every reason to be concerned that the resources for enforcing this act or any other act will not be available.

I want to say that today we're talking about catastrophic forest fires in the province of Ontario. The ministry decided to dumbsize. They decided to eliminate 17 forest fire attack bases. Their long-term eventual target — and I don't think it's all that long-term — is to close all fire attack bases.

We have 230,000 hectares of northwestern Ontario on fire. It seems to me that the dumb sizing, the downsizing of this part of the ministry, has a direct effect on the resource. I'm not blaming the minister for the weather, but it seems to me that if we'd had the resources, we would have been able to contain this problem in a far better way than we have been able to do so far.

So that members on the other side understand, on a 10-year average, 50,000 hectares are burned in forest fires in this province. That's 50,000 too many, but it's 50,000. We have 230,000 on fire right this minute, almost five times the average amount of hectares burned. That is a huge increase.

The minister may say that the downsizing of his operation is incidental to this, but frankly, who would believe that? No one would believe that. I'm saying to you that what the ministry does has a direct effect on the operations in this province. Whether it be in forest firefighting, whether it be in management of crown timber, whether it be in our provincial parks or whether it be in enforcing the aggregates act, it has a direct effect on our natural resources, has a direct effect on our economy, has a direct effect on our future and our children's future. This ministry is totally abdicating its



responsibility to the people of Ontario to protect our interests, both short-term and long-term, and the evidence is before us in the smoke and the fire coming out of the northwest today.

We're told that the ministry is further going to decrease its expenditures until they are but half the expenditures that the ministry made just one year ago. You might be surprised at some of the things MNR is intending to do or, more correctly, not do.

We have a permitting system in this province that provides permits for various things that happen on lands. We have a permitting system that permits certain things to happen in the water. We have a permitting system that gives people permission to start fires for various reasons. Last year, there were 14,400 permits issued for land-based activities, 1,300 in lakes and rivers, and 46,000 for people setting fires.

The ministry is eliminating 80% of these permits. Most notable and most surprising to me is the elimination of most of the requirements for fire permits in this province. The ministry says, "That takes a lot of time to administer." I would ask the ministry, how many hectares of timber have to be burned, how much environmental degradation has to occur to make up for the lack and abdication of responsibility by the ministry to do something as basic as enforce reasonable fire regulations in this province?

It is extraordinary to me and it should be extraordinary to all members that the ministry, at a time it is eliminating 17 fire attack bases, is moving out of the forest fire prevention business. I think you should ponder that one and whether that makes sense, either in the sustainability of the resource or in the economics of the revolution. I suggest to you it has no possible relationship to any kind of fiscal sanity or environmental protection.

As we come to the Aggregate Resources Act, will those inspectors have the resources to monitor the situation in the aggregate industry? I'm quite sceptical; I don't think they will. The second part of the aggregates act, and the Minister of Natural Resources will totally agree with me on this, is but a shell; it mirrors the Crown Forest Sustainability Act in that it provides permission but does not outline exactly what the standards are.

When we were dealing with the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, as members around here would know, the opposition parties, those at the time being the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party, demanded and asked of the minister that before we entered public hearings on this bill we understand what those technical standards were, what the regulations would say, what Parliament was about to give sanction to.

The government of the day agreed. They said: "That makes sense. Those technical standards, those regulations, those manuals will be presented to the committee that will study this bill so that you as legislators can understand what you are approving." We got those. There were over 1,000 pages in the manuals; they stood this high on desks. We even got from the ministry the opportunity to review those manuals for a week or two before the committee started so that we actually knew that the standards the ministry was proposing were acceptable to Parliament, were acceptable to the people of Ontario. In

this act, we are not going to know that unless the minister agrees to put forward those technical standards. Then perhaps the critics from the opposition will be able to say, "Yes, those particular standards make sense," or, "No, some of those standards are too low," or perhaps even, "No, that standard is unattainable and won't work."

1620

We are not going to have that opportunity. There will be no opportunity unless the minister agrees — I see his parliamentary assistant nodding his head; he no doubt agrees that those technical standards will be available before we take this bill out to committee. To ask us to make any kind of judgement on a bill that is a bill of permission to a minister to make whatever regulation he may wish is asking a Parliament far too much. I know that the parliamentary assistant, who is a strong believer in democracy, would not want us to be out at committee talking about issues we're incapable of discussing intelligently because we don't have the factual information.

I suspect that in response to my little endeavour today the parliamentary assistant will leap to his feet and promise us in the opposition that those standards will be available to us, that we will have time to review them so that we can go out to committee — I hope we do; I can think of areas that would really like to talk about this, particularly in the Caledon area, particularly in the Niagara Peninsula —

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** Essex South.

**Mr Michael Brown:** — Essex South and those areas around the greater Toronto area, particularly where there happens to be a great deal of activity in this industry, so that we can hear not only from the industry representatives, but from representatives in the community who may have other ideas about what the appropriate regulations might be.

We might also want to know from people at the public hearings, from environmental groups that may perhaps have different ideas about what the standards should be than the industry. That will be very hard to debate at committee. It will be very hard to make any kind of intelligent decision on behalf of the people of Ontario without having that information forward.

As a matter of fact, I suggest to the parliamentary assistant that one of the things he might want to do is to take some of the permissive parts of this bill away, once he has the regulations drawn for us to see, so that we might substitute the actual regulation in the legislation so that it cannot be changed by this government or another government or another government after that without the ability of the public to scrutinize it.

I think about this in a rather non-partisan way, because being a Liberal, I'm over here thinking about the Crown Forest Sustainability Act. I'm sure, as the Minister of Natural Resources at the time, Mr Hampton, took that bill through the Legislature and provided it with a huge amount of discretion, a huge amount of ministerial ability to redefine the bill almost at whim, he didn't suspect that the next Minister of Natural Resources would see that bill quite the way this one does.

**Mr Frank Klees (York-Mackenzie):** Think about it,

**Mr Michael Brown:** I don't think so. Probably, if Mr Hampton had to do it again — I'm just speculating, and



he's probably going to run in here and speak for himself — maybe he would have reconsidered and put some of those regulations actually into the legislation. He may have wanted to do that, and I'm suggesting that is a wise idea. It is far better to have those standards in the legislation, because if they are in the legislation a change to those standards is not done in a cabinet room where no one else in the province knows about it generally until about six months after it's happened.

I'm surprised all the time by that, and I'm sure other members are. Somebody will be in the constituency at an event and somebody will say, "Did you know?" and I'll say, "No, gee, I didn't know." So we check sometimes with the critic from our party about that particular issue and they'll say, "Gee, I didn't know that." But boy, after making some inquiries and talking to the minister you'll find that a regulation got changed. Frankly, in this business, you'll find that regulations very often affect the public more than the actual legislation.

I'm saying to the parliamentary assistant, who I know is a strong believer in democracy, that for us to have the proper public view of this bill so that we can make intelligent decisions over here in opposition and the public can have its say, he will commit to putting these manuals and regulations out with the bill so that when we go to committee we'll know that and then he will make the commitment, because I'm sure I will want to take some of those regulations and move them into the actual legislation. I'm sure that no one over there can disagree with that.

The industry wants that to happen. The industry wants the rules to be up front. Environmental groups want the rules to be up front. They want to know what the rules are. They don't want somebody sitting in that cabinet room down there saying, "Gee, I don't like the way that worked," and with a flick of the pen it's gone and changed and nobody had any idea that it was happening or any idea that it was being changed. You usually find out that nobody in that cabinet room had any idea what the implication on the ground might be to this.

I'm just urging, pleading that the parliamentary assistant or the minister will leap up when I'm finished and say: "Yes, you're right. We should enshrine those regulations actually in the bill" —

**Mrs Helen Johns (Huron):** Just like the Liberals did when they were in power.

**Mr Michael Brown:** "Just like the Liberals did when they were in power," she says; thank you — "and have them available for public scrutiny, not just for now, but for when we intend to change them, if in fact we do."

The second problem is we come to this whole notion of aggregates, an issue that can often be contentious in communities, often be contentious with municipalities, and we come to it in the context of Bill 20, the changes to the Planning Act.

Nobody really knows how that's going to work. Nobody really knows how that's going to play out. So we're going to have changes to the aggregates act and changes to land planning, and to top that off, we have a downsizing of the Ontario Municipal Board. Anybody I know who's been around the aggregates business knows you very often end up in front of the Ontario Municipal Board. That's unfortunate, but that's a fact of life. It

seems to me, when you take this new approach to the aggregates act, combined with the new Planning Act, combined with the downsizing of the Ontario Municipal Board, the government could be in for some very nasty surprises, as we go across this province in the next few years, in having disputes between the aggregates industry and the local community. None of us wants to have that happen because, as I said before, governments are the largest purchasers of the product.

As a boy from Sarnia, I am interested also in the changes to the Petroleum Resources Act. Anybody who spent his younger days tramping around Lambton, Kent and those counties that produce a fair bit of petroleum knows that this is an important industry to our province and that it is an important component of the local economies. As we go through this part of the bill, I am very much looking forward to the industry coming forward and providing us with their views and the local communities giving us their views because frankly, while superficially it looks to the uninformed as if this may not be a bad idea, I would be looking for the industry and the local communities to come before us and say to us, "My goodness, this is" either "good," "bad" or, "This should be changed," or "That should be changed."

1630

I hope that when the parliamentary assistant gets up to respond to this he also indicates to us how the aggregates act is going to work in the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, because there's a great problem and has been a great problem over time with permitting of aggregates. We build hundreds of kilometres of roads a year in the logging and timbering business, and that requires a great deal of aggregate from mostly local pits. It has been a frustration to people in the industry that those permits were sometimes a little bit difficult to obtain, that the ministry personnel weren't available when they should be available, that there was some difficulty just from a logistical standpoint with dealing with the roadbuilding.

I understand that through the forest sustainability act there will be more of an outcome-based approach to this and that many of these permits may not be needed, but I wonder, as I look around at MNR area and district offices that are being totally gutted throughout northern Ontario — some of them are even disappearing, let alone gutted — how it is that the people in the industry will get either advice on how to do things correctly, which they generally look for — and they've had long relationships with many of the offices in providing advice on how to do that, because they're primarily loggers; they're not primarily aggregate producers, and they want to do things the proper way and they really do need the ministry to be there so that they can get some advice.

They are not the huge aggregate producers of southern Ontario; these are fellows and women who are out in the forest trying to harvest Ontario's natural resources and do it in a responsible, sustainable way, but they're not experts at the aggregate business. Often, I know through my own experience, they have needed the assistance of MNR personnel to make sure that they did it the proper way. It was a cooperative effort; it was not a confrontational one; it was one where good advice could be given by local offices to local people on how to achieve the best result for both the economy and the environment.



I look at Espanola. They went from 38 employees to 17. Someone might believe that office will be able to provide adequate service, but I haven't found one. I have not found one. I have attended that office and talked to the people who work there; I've talked to people in the industry who rely on them; I've talked to people in the angling and hunting fraternity; I've talked to all — I guess I probably haven't talked to them all, but I've talked to quite a number of people who rely on the services of the Ministry of Natural Resources, and they're dumfounded by a decision like that. They see government just totally evaporating, as if government does not need to be there.

The impact on towns like Espanola, or Blind River, which was even more devastated —

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** Temagami.

**Mr Michael Brown:** Temagami is gone. It is going to be very difficult for those people to deal with resource management in an effective way because they relied on the advice and direction and assistance of those people in the Ministry of Natural Resources to help them, and they did. They are well-respected; the ministry people are well-respected in those communities. Those services will no longer be available. I'm even told, and you might find this hard to believe, that at the area offices, if you try to come in off the street, perhaps to fill in an application for a moose tag or to ask about some forestry project you're interested in, you won't get through the door because they're going to lock it. There will be people working in there, but they will not deal with the public because with this government you've got to have an 800 number or you just can't operate. They will call somebody somewhere about something and talk to the voice mail — I hope we get appropriate music for this, it's going to have to be quite long. But the 800-line solution to places like Espanola and Blind River, Temagami, Chapleau, any of those communities, is not going to be a solution that works. I want the parliamentary assistant to tell me, when you're dealing with people in the forest industry who will be dealing with aggregates, because that's the nature of their business, but they're not experts, how they are going to do this.

I think the big companies will probably be able to handle it just fine because they have the staff, they have the expertise, but when we are talking to the small, independent logger along the North Shore of Lake Huron, for example, he'd like some advice. Frankly, I'm not sure he's going to get it. And who will be in trouble? It'll be him but it'll also be the environment, it'll also be the economy. That's who's going to be in trouble.

The parliamentary assistant, along that line — I digress slightly, but I want to talk about the independent loggers along the North Shore of Lake Huron. You know, there's quite a number. They're in the lower Spanish and the Mississagi crown land units. Those fellows and women are really concerned with how the Crown Forest Sustainability Act is going to impact them. I phoned and talked to the ministry about it, because they come to see me. They said: "I don't know how this is going to work. How are we going to manage this when there's six or seven of us out in the same specific area? How are we going to do that?" I said: "Well, gee, I don't know. Let's get the ministry to help us."

Over in the Mississagi unit I think there are 19 or 20 contractors within a relatively small area. I wanted to know how this would be dealt with. How are you going to form this co-op company? How are you going to do that? I called the office, talked to the Espanola area people and they said, "Well, gee, Mr Brown, I'd like to go out and talk to them too, but I don't know what to tell them because nobody has decided yet."

So I went to the minister and I said: "You know what you got to do here, Chris, you've got to have somebody come up and let's have a meeting, let's get everybody in the area right from Sault Ste Marie through to Sudbury. Let's get them all in the same room at the same time so they can be told the same story, so there'll be no problem with communication, and let's talk about this." That will allay your fears, hopefully; we'll find a solution, hopefully; we'll be able to deal with this act, hopefully. But you know, I've got a bunch of commitments, but I haven't seen anybody yet.

I haven't been able to say to those loggers we're going to have a meeting on Saturday or we're going to have a meeting three weeks from Saturday. I haven't been able to arrange the meeting. My goodness, if you can't do that, how are you going to deal with the aggregates that are in the forest units? How are you going to give them advice? Because they should know.

**1640**

The parliamentary assistant would know that the planning will likely cost for a crown unit about \$300,000. That's the estimate that I'm getting, \$300,000 that these independent loggers aren't paying right at the moment. They might now because we passed Bill 36 just a bit ago, but at the moment, they're not doing that. So we're going to add this user fee of about \$300,000 split among them in some fashion for this service that they did not have to pay for before. Welcome to user-fee Ontario. They're going to have to do that and they're not going to get assistance with how to deal with aggregates.

I look over at some of the northern members and I know — they're nodding — they know the real world out there is the world I'm talking about and that you can't do it with half the staff you used to have. It can't be done. Sure, there can be efficiencies. Nobody's saying there can't be efficiencies. Nobody's even saying, at least I'm not saying, that this aggregates act is the wrong direction, but what I am saying is, we don't know whether it's the wrong direction or not because you haven't supplied us with the information. I'm looking forward to the parliamentary assistant committing to having the regulations and the manuals here or, even better, providing us with a list of amendments to the act itself that spells out those technical standards so that we, as parliamentarians, can make a reasonable judgement.

I look over on the Tory benches and I know there are lot of people here from rural Ontario. There aren't a heck of a lot of gravel pits in downtown Toronto.

**Mr Klees:** There were.

**Mr Michael Brown:** Yes there were, but there aren't now. The problem with the aggregates industry, is generally speaking, a rural phenomenon. I remember Ian Scott. He could never understand the dump questions around here. Ian would say: "Boy, why do I care? My constituents don't care whether you put it in Caledon or



you put it out in Durham, or where you put it. We don't have any dumps in Toronto, so it's not a problem." We're finding out there are a few around here now that nobody seemed to know about, but it's the same thing. City folk, because they don't deal with this issue, don't understand it perhaps as intimately as those people out in the aggregate-producing areas of the province will.

As we speak, as we go along and review this bill more carefully, I would suggest that the problem the opposition is having basically is this information gap, the gap between what this bill really means and what it says. And that's fair enough. I understand that it takes time to work out the regulations, but we're going to have them before the committee hearings. When we get that we can make a reasonable judgement and maybe we'll be supportive. But the bigger problem is we don't believe the ministry is going to be able to enforce their own regulations in their own act. Even if we get a set of regulations that look reasonable to us, protect the environment, are workable by the industry, we have no assurance whatever that this ministry has any chance of actually administering this piece of legislation.

**Mr Klees:** Oh, come on.

**Mr Michael Brown:** The parliamentary assistant says, "Oh, come on."

Half the budget, only 55% of the employees, and you think you can do everything you used to do as well as you used to do it. Well, good luck. The forest fire story tells it all. It doesn't work and in the dumbsizing you are going through, you're going to cost the people of Ontario a lot of dollars.

With that, I think I'll conclude these brief remarks. I'll continue to be involved in the discussion. I look forward to the committee hearings and I look forward to a commitment from the government that we will not proceed through the committee stage until the technical data, the regulations, are supplied to the opposition. That is the precedent we have set here dealing with self-regulation bills in terms of the Crown Forest Sustainability Act and I think those great democrats across the floor would believe it is only reasonable to supply those.

Thank you very much for this opportunity, Madam Speaker. I had neglected to ask for unanimous consent for my colleague to take the rest of my time as critic. Would that be acceptable to the House?

**The Acting Speaker:** Is that agreed, that the Liberals split the lead-off time? Agreed.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Thank you very much for that consent. I won't be overly long, because I know there are members of the New Democratic Party who wish to address this bill as well, and I know I'll have briefing notes by the time I get started on this bill.

It is a very significant bill, quite obviously. It is one which deals with aggregates. I know that. The reason I have an interest in aggregates is because I have a great interest in the Niagara Escarpment Commission. There are a lot of aggregates in the Niagara Escarpment. We have, as environmentalists, been endeavouring to protect the Niagara Escarpment, those of us who are concerned about the environment.

**Mr Chris Stockwell (Etobicoke West):** What do you mean "we as environmentalists"?

**Mr Bradley:** I'm sure that includes the member for Etobicoke West. I'm sure he's a strong environmentalist. His environmental credentials have not been questioned by his fellow member from Rexdale, so I know he must be a strong environmentalist.

I worry when I see Bill 52, the MNR aggregate and petroleum resources act, introduced in the Legislature.

I see the member for Wentworth East is here today. There's a matter of great controversy in his riding. I think it's his riding. It's the Stoney Creek area along the escarpment.

There's always a problem with aggregates. We have one problem or one challenge, and that is to get the material we need to build roads. So we do need aggregate material. But second, we want to preserve certain areas of the province and not see the aggregate used from that specific area.

I recall a number of years ago being at an environment ministers' conference where we were going from Calgary, I guess it was, to Banff. I'd never been in that part of the country before. It was a very attractive part of the country, and I found many of the areas to be attractive to tourists and simply to the human eye. However, I noticed they were allowing the mining of aggregate along some of the most beautiful areas in the province of Alberta, and I couldn't believe it. I asked the environment minister from Alberta at the time, who later became Deputy Premier and then was, I think, dropped from the cabinet or something of that nature — that doesn't matter — why they would allow this in this area, particularly with tourists being attracted to that area. He said, "We need aggregate for roadbuilding purposes and other such purposes." I thought that was a mistake in terms of using that particular area to obtain that material.

Bill 52 is obviously part of this government's wider effort to shift responsibility for direct program delivery to industry. This is similar to the Crown Forest Sustainability Act and to the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations' recently introduced Safety and Consumer Statutes Administration Act. The bill proposes that the province's aggregate and petroleum industries now be responsible for day-to-day site inspections and monitoring, with the government's role restricted to establishing minimum standards, issuing permits and enforcement. The bill will also allow the government to use private inspectors who are certified by the ministry.

I'm one who doesn't agree with that approach, not simply because this government is adopting it. I supported the other approach because I think it is a superior approach. I don't think you can put Colonel Sanders in charge of the chicken coop. You can't do that, because Colonel Sanders, the late Colonel Sanders now — the successor to Colonel Sanders was a person who wanted to obtain chickens for the purpose of cooking them for human consumption. That's what I'm informed anyway.

In this case, we have the industry being put in charge of itself. In other words, both the aggregate and petroleum industries will now be responsible for day-to-day site inspections and monitoring. I think an independent source, an independent organization, in this case the government, would do a better job than leaving that to those in the business. I say that for two reasons —



**Mr Stockwell:** Sounds to me like you're speaking and learning about this at the same time.

**Mr Bradley:** The member for Etobicoke West is quite right in assuming he has a lot to learn about this. I thought that's what he said. He said it was a learning process, and I assume, since he wasn't in his own seat, that he was trying to become educated on this by the member for Muskoka-Georgian Bay.

1650

We have the Niagara Escarpment along our area, and I'm very proud of the Niagara Escarpment. I think it's been very helpful to tourism, I think it's aesthetically beautiful, and I resent the assaults on the Niagara Escarpment that have taken place over the years. I've said on many occasions in this House that the member for Carleton, the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, was responsible for establishing, or at least the minister responsible at the time the Progressive Conservative government of William Davis established, the Niagara Escarpment Commission.

One of the concerns was that there would be quarrying taking place, aggregate being removed in places where most people thought that should not happen. Again I go back to the fact that some of the operators have done a good job over the years. They are providing a service. But I think we have to be very cautious when we allow that kind of development — and I call that “development” because it's a mining development — in areas that should be protected along the escarpment.

I know that industry associations have been consulted on the bill, but other groups have not been included, and this seems to be a pattern that we're seeing with the government. With all these deregulation bills, with all of the bills that seem to be slanting the government towards industry as opposed to the consumer, we see some consultation with the industries affected but not consultations with the public at large or with consumers or those who might be adversely impacted.

Some of my friends who are on the other side of the House who represent the Halton area know there has been some controversy with potential aggregate activity along the Niagara Escarpment there, and of course potentially the use of a landfill site along that area once it is completed in terms of its use as a quarry.

In general, the industry associations, such as the Aggregate Producers' Association of Ontario and the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, support the legislation, and that is certainly no surprise to me. Environmental groups, however, are concerned that the proposed minimum standards, which by the way are not included in the act and will instead be set out in regulations, will be too weak. In addition, they are concerned that the recent Ministry of Natural Resources layoffs will leave too few ministry staff to enforce the new standards. OPSEU is opposed to the hiring of private inspectors to replace ministry staff, and I certainly understand their concerns in trying to represent their employees.

But I want to look at the previous concerns that were expressed; first of all, that the minimum standards are not included in the act. One of the problems we have with legislation in this House is that the dynamite is actually in the regulations and not in the act. It's one thing to pass legislation to have some half-baked promise from the

government that the regulations will be satisfactory to perhaps the environmental community, but to the community at large, and that the consumer or the environment will be protected, but it would be superior and easier to support legislation if one could see those regulations before dealing with the legislation.

We had the same problem, of course, with the Planning Act changes. People said: “You have to have faith. You have to know that the policy statements that we're going to have that go along with the changes to the Planning Act will be strong enough; they will satisfy you. You will see that they will serve the purpose of protecting the environment and environmentally sensitive areas and good planning processes.” Unfortunately, we did not see those regulations or those policy statements before the legislation was passed. As a result — well, we voted against the legislation.

You might find sometimes — I'm not saying with that bill — that if the government were to show us the specific regulations up front, you may find in that case that the opposition and the public would feel more at ease with the legislation. But we are suspicious that those regulations will be weakened, because the entire thrust of the government is to please the business community. While all of us want to see a strong and thriving business community, we also want to see development in the province being of the sustainable brand and not of the unsustainable type.

Second, there is a concern, and this is happening throughout the government — everybody thinks this can be done and there are no consequences, but when you lose staff, you lose the people who carry out the responsibilities that were there previously. With the Ministry of Natural Resources layoffs, I believe, as others have expressed the concern, that there will be too few ministry employees to enforce the new standards. The ministry employees are there to protect the public at large, the people of the province, and I think people had faith in that. They didn't always please the people who were being inspected, but I think the public felt somewhat at ease with those people on the scene.

New technical standards will be created to regulate the province's aggregates industry. That's interesting to see. We don't know what the consequences of that will be at this time. Similar to the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, an aggregates trust fund will be established to pool annual licence fees and provide for rehabilitation where permits have been revoked as a result of bankruptcy or default. The fund will be administered by the industry.

Again, I would prefer to see that fund administered by the Ministry of Natural Resources, but I think the existence of the fund is positive, because we must have that money available should there be the consequences or the circumstances I previously described.

In regard to the petroleum and brine industries regulation, the new standards will be developed to regulate the industry. Again, we'd like to see what those standards are. We are told they will be based on the Canadian Standards Association standard for hydrocarbon storage. We hope they will be of the strongest type, because Ontario, in years gone by, has been a leader across this country in this regard.



It mentions as well that a new trust fund funded by industry will pay for the continued operation of the geological core and chip library, which provides information and research services to the industry and academic institutions. That's a positive part of the legislation, in my belief.

Maximum fines for offences under the Petroleum Resources Act are increased from \$10,000 to \$500,000 and the time period for initiating prosecution is extended. I think that's a step forward. However, I found when I was Minister of the Environment that the most compelling argument that could be made to have companies live up to their obligations was to make directors of the companies responsible for the activities of the company. When it says in the legislation that the director may go to jail — not that you want to line up directors and put them in jail; that's the last thing you want — when it said the most serious consequence would be a jail term for a director and an obligation on that director, one found that the industry moved quickly and comprehensively to deal with environmental problems. I think it would be superior if that were contained in this legislation.

But \$500,000 — half a million dollars, to put it in higher-sounding terms — is better than \$10,000. I still think the fines could be higher, but that's perhaps a matter that would be best argued by the lawyers.

The annual production and rig licences will be replaced by a life-cycle well licence, covering the entire lifespan of a well. I would hope that wouldn't mean there wouldn't be inspection and observation of the company, which one might have anticipated would have happened with the yearly licence renewal.

I look at this and I understand it's the government's philosophy, so I'm not saying you're being inconsistent with your philosophy. You believe business should be able to regulate itself, that government should get out of the way of business. I think there are some places where that's true. There are some aspects of the legislation that are supportable and we will look forward to seeing them implemented, but I see the general thrust as being not particularly helpful in terms of turning over the responsibility to the industry itself. I don't think it's fair to expect industry to be tough on itself, and I don't think you're going to see that happen as much as it would if the government, or the Ministry of Natural Resources in this case, were in charge.

1700

In terms of the Niagara Escarpment, I had a newspaper article earlier, which I won't be able to find — oh, I have — that talks about the Niagara Escarpment and some of the problems existing there. It's not only aggregates that are a threat to the escarpment; it is also other forms of development.

I notice in the St Catharines area, actually the town of Lincoln, "The Niagara Escarpment Commission is urging a provincial cabinet minister" — that would be Ms Elliott, the Minister of Environment and Energy — "to reject a proposed subdivision on escarpment lands in Lincoln." Just as sometimes aggregates activities are not desirable in certain areas of the escarpment, so are subdivisions sometimes not reasonable.

"The commission has sent a three-page brief to Environment and Energy Minister Brenda Elliott this week throwing its support behind a provincial hearing officer's decision to reject the proposed Twenty Valley Estates. The hearing officer, John McClelland, released his decision late last month after reviewing three days of testimony for and against the planned 22-home subdivision near Jordan last February. The commission told Ms Elliott this week that it supports Mr McClelland's conclusions that the 27-hectare" — or as I still say, 67-acre development — "would have a negative impact on the escarpment environment and surrounding agricultural activities."

Ms Elliott and her cabinet colleagues have not established a deadline for dealing with this, but I hope they would. Naturally the town of Lincoln and the regional municipality of Niagara support it. Surprise, surprise: a municipality supporting development.

As I say, there are places that have to be used for aggregates. I can't deny that. It's needed. You can't say, on one hand, "We don't want any aggregates activities taking place, any mining of aggregates taking place anywhere in Ontario," and then expect, for instance, that you're going to build roads. That's not realistic. But I think choosing the right place and operating the quarrying activities under appropriate regulations and provincial inspection would be superior.

Similarly with the petroleum association: I must give credit to the Canadian Petroleum Association in one regard, and that was with the municipal industrial strategy for abatement program, under the auspices of the Ministry of the Environment. The first to come on line and one of the most cooperative sectors was the petroleum sector, which had already done extensive monitoring on its own.

The member for Sudbury East awaits an opportunity to speak on this matter. I used to live in Sudbury at one time, so I know there are far more rocks in Sudbury than there are in southern Ontario. In fact, many of the streets there used to end in what we would call — we wouldn't call them mountains — hills. So they may be dealing with a different circumstance there.

In southern Ontario, though, I suspect most people would like to see the escarpment retained for present purposes. They worry about the effect on groundwater of quarrying activities. I mention this with the petroleum industry, for instance, in terms of how important it is. I was flabbergasted the other day to learn what the effect would be of one or two drops of petroleum in a waterway and how that spreads throughout a waterway. It takes very little to contaminate a specific waterway, particularly if it's one that isn't flowing but, rather, one that is still. Whatever we can do to ensure the safe handling of petroleum products, the safe storage of petroleum products, is going to be beneficial to those of us in this province.

I lament again the loss of so many in the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of Environment and Energy who used to undertake supervisory activities, inspection activities and monitoring activities. I think this bill really is necessitated by the fact that the government is annihilating those ministries by removing so many of the staff and taking away so many of the resources.

I look with suspicion upon this. I worry when you turn over the forests of this province to what somebody



referred to the other day as the lumber barons — I don't know if that's a word you use. But the lumbering companies, particularly the larger lumbering companies in the province, may do a good job but I think we're in much safer hands when the Ministry of Natural Resources is in charge of regeneration or at least the supervision of regeneration. Similarly with the restoration that must take place when the coring activities are finished, I think it would be advantageous to have a very strong role played by the Ministry of Natural Resources.

In a general sense I plead with government at all levels, not simply this government, to expose to the public, to members of the opposition and to their own members the regulations that accompany all legislation rather than simply wait for them to be developed later. Members will find, and I have found in my experience, that often the spirit of legislation is almost defeated by the specifics: the regulations that are passed through cabinet and enacted by cabinet to accompany the legislation.

I recall the famous spills bill which was passed in 1979 by the Legislature and never proclaimed into law by the Conservative government because they never agreed with it. It was an environmental protection bill. Finally in 1985, when the Liberal government took over, in a very short time the spills bill was proclaimed and put into effect, but part of that involved hearings around the province on the regulations. One concern I heard expressed to me was, "If you proclaim the spills bill, wouldn't it be nice if everybody in the province knew what the regulations were." I thought that was a fair comment on the part of industry and consumers and environmentalists, and as a result I had hearings conducted around the province where people could have input on the regulations; not on the legislation — it had already passed — but on the regulations.

I think it would be superior for all members of the Legislature if that happened. It would give the government backbenchers more to do than clap when ministers get up and laugh at the Premier's jokes and vote the right way in committee. I really think that government backbenchers are people who are underutilized. That doesn't mean everybody who sits on the back bench, but I think they're underutilized talent in the Legislature. If you were allowed to deal with regulations in committee and were not given orders by the boss on how to vote but really allowed to use your own background expertise, I think we could have superior regulations developed.

I simply wish that everybody would be free in committee — almost freed, at least — of political considerations, opposition and government, so you could come up with reasonable regulations and even some good changes to legislation. Unfortunately, the way the system works is that the government, whoever it is, puts pressure on its own members to vote a certain way in committee and the opposition feels that if the government has voted that way, it must be wrong, so they vote against it. I think it would be superior if both were to place in the background their political considerations so we could gain the expertise.

I noticed the other day that a number of members of the government are insurance men, and women maybe, and a lot of lawyers and small business people who I think have some talents that could be used in legislation.

I remember the member for Middlesex, who was a London planner, sat on the committee dealing with the Planning Act and he had to sit there silently the whole time because obviously somebody had told him he couldn't speak out. I was trying to get from him, with his expertise as a planner, whether the changes to the act were reasonable in certain areas, and either he felt they weren't and didn't want to say anything or he just didn't want to say anything; I can't make that judgement. I just thought we could have used that talent.

I'm not a planner. I've been on a city council and I've listened to planners, I've been a minister and I've listened to planners, but here was a person who is a professional planner, who dealt on a day-to-day basis with planning activities — he's in the House today — and I was not getting the benefit of his expertise. I thought with the individual clause-by-clause provisions of the bill — not the principle; the government has the right to put forward whatever principle it wants — but with clause-by-clause consideration, here was a gentleman who was obviously expert in the field and we couldn't hear what he thought were the practical considerations. I think we lose when we can't have people doing that.

I wouldn't hold the government to it — it's his opinion — but that's how we can use the talent of members of this Legislature. Instead, we draw the partisan lines, and I think we lose an awful lot by that.

**1710**

That's why, instead of going to a regulations committee of cabinet with perhaps a couple of non-cabinet people on it, I think regulations going to a full committee all the time, with authority to make some changes, perhaps conduct some hearings, would be very useful, because what you're going to find with this legislation is that yes, certain things are contained within the provisions of the bill, but the real dynamite will be contained within the regulations themselves.

The critic in the area, the member for Algoma-Manitoulin, who is far more expert than I, has outlined his concerns and his affirmations about certain parts of the bill, and I certainly concur with that. I look forward to the hearings which I presume will be held, some of them perhaps in the Niagara Peninsula so that people along the Niagara Escarpment can have their input. I hope some of them might be held in Halton, for instance, and perhaps other areas where this is a controversial matter, so that the public can have input, and even more important than that, not only that the public can have input but that the government will listen to that input and make any changes that can accommodate the concerns expressed by those individuals.

I promised I would not take the full time allocated to the official opposition in this case, and I look forward with anticipation to listening to the member for Sudbury East, who I think is going to be next in this debate, as she has some considerable expertise in this field and I'm sure will be every bit as objective as I in her evaluation of this legislation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Questions or comments?

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** This piece of legislation has been covered by both Liberal members who spoke on it. It is a piece of legislation that was



brought forward as a result of the decision made by Mike Harris and Chris Hodgson to gut the Ministry of Natural Resources and lay off 30% or 40% of the employees —

**Interjection:** It's 45%.

**Mr Len Wood:** — 45% of the employees and shut down government offices all over the place. Just in the town of Cochrane, they've shut down the regional office, and anything that was happening out of there, they've moved it to Timmins. They've laid off people in Hearst, Cochrane, Kapuskasing, the whole area right along Highway 11.

As a result, they do not have the people they need to monitor what the forest companies are doing or what the aggregate companies are doing. All of this is part of the game that is being played to make sure that you, Mr Speaker, and I and other people get a 30% tax cut. Part of it is going to start on July 1, but as a result, they've turned over the control and the regulation of the aggregate industry and the forest industry to the private companies. Nobody in Ontario is going to know what is happening out there, where the holes are being dug, where the gravel is coming from. We're going to have a complete mess right throughout northern Ontario, and even in southern Ontario, I understand, the Niagara Escarpment. Nobody's going to be monitoring these areas, so we're going to have a complete destruction of the resources.

The aggregate is non-renewable, so once they've used them and dug holes all over the place, then the damage is done. As far as forestry is concerned, there's nobody out there to monitor it, so we don't know what's going to happen until eight, 10, 15 years down the road when we find out that the damage has been done and it's all been done as a result of Mike Harris and Chris Hodgson deciding that they're going to gut the Ministry of Natural Resources, turn everything over to the private sector and give a tax break to the people of Ontario which people don't want when this is happening.

**Mr Klees:** It's always a pleasure to follow up on the member for Cochrane North, who has the uncanny ability of compressing a minimum of thought into a maximum of time. But I'm pleased to respond to the member for Algoma-Manitoulin as well as the member for St Catharines for their contribution to this debate.

The member for Algoma-Manitoulin is right, and that is that I do care very much for the democratic process. What I find interesting, though, is that on the one hand he argues that we should be concerned about the democratic process, and on the other hand, he argues that the regulations should be preset before we go to the stakeholders, before we go to the public. I want to assure the honourable member that this government, this ministry, particularly with regard to this piece of legislation, will not do that. What we will do is be responsive to the democratic process. We have committed to the stakeholders who would be affected by this legislation that we would consult with them, that we would meet with them, that we would talk with them about what the regulations should be containing and to ensure that there are high standards, to ensure this is an effective piece of legislation.

In the final analysis, the members from Algoma-Manitoulin and St Catharines would agree that this will

be in the best interests of all concerned and that together we want to work to ensure that this province has legislation that is workable, that works from the standpoint of the industry, that works from the standpoint of government. We truly are going to work together to ensure that we have an effective piece of legislation here.

**Mr Crozier:** I too want to add my comments to those of my colleagues from Algoma-Manitoulin and St Catharines. In the great southwest, in the Sun Parlour of Canada, Essex county, we have several areas of aggregate producers. The industry flourishes there. In the Amherstburg-Anderdon-Malden area, in the Leamington-Mersea area and on Pelee Island, we have responsible business people who produce aggregate for use down our way.

I can think of no better way to use the aggregate they produce in a responsible way than to have the Minister of Transportation approve the completion of the Highway 3 bypass so we can then get all that great produce we have, the vegetables and tomatoes and the processed vegetables, out to the market. I would encourage always the use of our natural resources in a responsible way and I can think of no more responsible way than the completion of the Highway 3 bypass.

**Ms Martel:** In response to the comments made by the member for Algoma-Manitoulin, let me tell him that he shouldn't be surprised that the parliamentary assistant has just in this House said that the government will not put before this House and put before members who will be on the committee the technical standards which are at the heart of this bill.

As we operate now, we operate in a vacuum, because all the technical standards that the aggregate industry is to operate by have not yet been developed and therefore the public, during public hearings, cannot come and make a comment on that. The member for Algoma-Manitoulin shouldn't be surprised, because the government House leader made it very clear to our House leader that the government wanted this bill passed before this session ended, public hearings and all. So there is no room here for public hearing, for input from the public about some very legitimate concerns.

I would also say to the member, and I'm sure he'll agree with me, that the stakeholders in this case are not only the representatives from the aggregate industry. People in the environmental community have some serious concerns about the changes being proposed here. Those folks have to be involved in the process of developing the technical standards the aggregate industry will have to live by. Those folks should have a chance before the public hearings even start to be involved in the development of the same, so that they're involved at the front end of the process instead of being told, when the bill is passed and the regulations are passed: "Here it is. Now you live with it."

One final thing, and this is a point from the member for Algoma-Manitoulin that I agree with entirely. The crux of the matter here for us as opposition members is that the Ministry of Natural Resources will not be able to monitor compliance. That is the beginning and the end of the discussion. When you lay off half the staff, as the Minister of Natural Resources has done in this province, it will be impossible to monitor compliance in this industry. We have no better proof of what happens in a



negative way than what we are seeing now in the forestry industry and the forest fires which are plaguing this province because of the closures of all those MNR —

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. Your time has expired. The member for Algoma-Manitoulin, you have two minutes to reply.

1720

**Mr Michael Brown:** I appreciate the comments from the members for Essex South, Cochrane North, Sudbury East and York-Mackenzie. I thought the member for York-Mackenzie, when he stood up, would talk about slot machines or extended drinking hours. I was shocked when he didn't speak to those. I think he misunderstands the democratic process in a way that would indicate he doesn't have a heck of a lot of respect for this place.

The idea that a government could not put regulations out for public discussion is just absurd. It is absolutely the most absurd thing I think I have heard here. It is the opportunity for people to come and speak to a specific. This is just a big ball of air without those technical standards that we demand to see. I know the industry wants to see them so that when they come to committee, they can discuss them intelligently, can say, "This makes sense," or "No, it doesn't make sense," and they will have a public venue to do that. Other groups in the community would want to see them.

There is no reason; there is precedent. The only other bill I remember that attacks an issue in this way was the Crown Forest Sustainability Act. They were produced, and when they were produced, it caused those regulations, at least some of them, to be modified to fit what the industry, what the environmental groups had to say at committee.

Let's see them. Why not see them? The only reason you don't want to show them to us is because you don't know what they are. Let's see them. What have you got to hide?

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Ms Martel:** As I begin my remarks today, let me say at the outset that neither myself nor the members of my caucus will be supporting Bill 52. I don't think that comes as any surprise to any member in this House, given the criticisms I raised with the minister himself when he announced this bill in this House on May 14. At that time, I made it very clear that this followed a pattern by this government — it certainly follows a pattern by this minister — of abdicating all responsibility for the protection and the maintenance of natural resources in this province and that we would not support it because of that.

Second, far be it from the minister to try to assure the House that the remaining staff at the ministry will be in a position to monitor compliance, when he knows and all of us in the opposition know that as a consequence of the cuts to his ministry to finance the big tax break, almost one-half of the full-time equivalents in his ministry are going out the door and more than 900 of those staff, OPSEU members alone, received their pink slips about three weeks ago.

We find ourselves in a position that my party and myself have a fundamental difference of opinion with this Conservative government when it comes to the issue in terms of philosophy and direction that the government is

taking as it respects natural resources in the province. Simply put, it is my view that this government sees itself as having absolutely no responsibility when it comes to the protection and the maintenance of natural resources in the province of Ontario.

The government does not believe that the crown has any role at all in ensuring that natural resources, which belong to all the people of the province, are going to be used not only for the people who work in the various industries that use the resources now, but will be in place for their children and their children's children. Whether we are talking about timber resources, whether we are talking about fish and wildlife resources, whether we are talking about provincial parks as a resource — and they are, in Ontario — or whether now in the context of this bill we are talking about the aggregate resources of the province and the petroleum resources of the province, the fact of the matter is that the government truly believes, for a reason that I just cannot fathom, that the industry itself, and by itself, will effectively utilize those resources and the government at no point in time will ever have to intervene to ensure that the practices being used by the industry are sustainable and environmentally sound and will guarantee jobs not only for people working in those industries now, but for those people's children and their children's children.

It is that philosophy, which I fundamentally disagree with, that leads the government to choose a direction which in essence offloads all of the government's and the crown's responsibility when it comes to protecting and maintaining natural resources. It offloads those responsibilities on to the very group that is going to exploit those resources: the industry itself.

Having been a Minister of Northern Development and Mines, I can say that for the most part the people whom I dealt with as minister of mines did care about the environment and were prepared to work with the rules and regulations in the province of Ontario the way they were supposed to. But, you know, there were those people who couldn't have cared less about the rules and the regulations that had been put in place or a reason in this province: to ensure that the exploitation of the resource was done in an environmentally sound way and in a safe way for workers. It was those people who were far more interested in how much money they could make in the province exploiting the resource than they were about ensuring that the resource could be used for a long time in the future so that many people would experience those benefits, both monetary and otherwise.

My concern with this bill is the same concern that I have with the business plan that has been given to this House, presented by the Minister of Natural Resources. It is that the government, with its philosophy of having no responsibility whatsoever in protecting the resource, now presents a direction which essentially says the industry will regulate itself, and the only role of the crown and of the government and of the Minister of Natural Resources is somehow to determine and set what those standards will be which people have to operate by. That seems to be the only role that government now has.

While the minister tried to say in his announcement in this House that one of the core businesses of the ministry will in fact be to develop those standards, and by the way



one of the other core businesses will be to monitor compliance of those standards, the minister can't fool anyone with that kind of rhetoric. You cannot lay off almost half of the full-time staff in your ministry and expect to do the same as you did before. We're going to do less for less in the province of Ontario, and when we do less for less when it comes to natural resources, it means that we put resources that belong to everyone at risk, and we put the jobs associated with those resources at risk, and we put the economies of a number of communities, especially in northern Ontario, at risk as well.

1730

But that is what appears to be the new direction of this Conservative government. The minister is quite upfront about that new direction. If I take a look at the business plan itself from the Ministry of Natural Resources, it says the following with respect to the forestry industry: "What responsibilities is MNR transferring to clients and partners?" And the answer is that "MNR plans to transfer a number of responsibilities, along with the cost, to clients and partners. These will be activities that are appropriate for the private sector or others to assume." The transfers include the following: firstly, forest management planning; secondly, forest operations, including harvest, renewal, funding for renewal, collecting forest information, some aspects of operational science, assessing and reporting and self-compliance as part of a new MNR compliance strategy, a greater role for municipalities in determining natural resource values as part of municipal planning.

It's very clear what's going to happen in the forest industry as a result of the business plan. As I raised in this House when I spoke on Bill 36, my concern is that as you do that and as some of the bad actors start to disregard all the rules because their first interest is in making a profit and not operating in an environmentally sound and ecologically sound way, the people who suffer in the end are the people who work in those industries, the men and women who rely on the sale of forest products to bring home their own livelihoods. Because what will happen — I am convinced of it — is that the environmental groups who watch the practices in this province disappear or be degraded will be the first out there trying to convince people who purchase our forestry products not to buy from Ontario, just as they tried to do with MacMillan Bloedel in BC.

That continues to be my concern with the bill that is before us, because the bill that is before us contains the same kind of rhetoric and the same kind of stated policies, which is the new direction which I outlined. Very specifically, in the statement the minister made in this House on May 14, he said the following: "[O]ur government has pledged to change the way government works by providing better services at a price the taxpayer can afford.... We will shift more responsibility for direct program delivery to industry, making it more accountable for meeting provincial environmental standards."

Again, if you look at the compendium that came with the bill, the ministry makes it very clear that the only role they will have in this process after they shift the compliance responsibility over to the industry is to somehow try and do some audits of some companies — I presume they are going to be the poor players in the industry — and in

some way, shape or form still try to monitor all of the reports that are supposed to come in from all of the industry representatives who have licences and permits to operate: to try and monitor those to ensure that whatever is filed in the report is factually correct, that whatever remedial measures are supposed to be taken out by the company will in fact be done, and that everything is on the up and up. Again, in an environment where some 2,000 staff at the Ministry of Natural Resources are going out the door, the ministry will be completely incapable of assuming those responsibilities.

The situation with respect to the inspectors who carry out some of the work under the aggregates act now is even more compelling to demonstrate how this group of folks will be unable to monitor compliance under this act. I was told by representatives of the industry — one of whom is here in the gallery today — who met with me to express their feelings about this bill that some 40 inspectors in the province monitor the government's responsibility under the current act, and they have been advised that this number will be reduced to 14 by the time all of the layoffs take effect at the ministry. There will be 14 inspectors left out of a current pool of 40 to try and monitor compliance. It's no wonder the government is offloading all of its responsibility, because with those kinds of layoffs the government can't continue to assume its responsibilities under the act. That's what's really at the heart of this bill.

The philosophy and the direction is one that I am fundamentally opposed to because, as I said earlier, I firmly believe that government should, and does, have a strong role to play in the protection and the maintenance of our resources, be they again timber resources in this province, fish and wildlife resources, the provincial parks system, which is a resource that we all benefit from, and here, aggregate resources.

I believe as well that not only does the government have a responsibility and must be ensuring the protection and maintenance of those resources, but the government also has a role to play in ensuring that the public's voice is heard with respect to how those resources are used in the province of Ontario.

My colleague from St Catharines talked at some length about his concern for the escarpment and his concern about how we protect some of the values in the escarpment that are recognized not only provincially but internationally. Clearly, it's a very difficult balance that must be struck between those people who want to use the resource and those people in the province who feel there are values that have to be protected and therefore in some cases the resource should not be exploited.

I firmly believe that it's the role of the government to ensure that the public's voice is heard on that important issue, to be the mediator between all those conflicting resource users and to find the solutions which will on the one hand ensure that we don't destroy an important industry in the province, which is the aggregate industry, but that we do at the same time protect those values which are recognized internationally as ecological values that should be protected. The government, not the industry, should be the group that makes those fundamental decisions.



What I see in this bill — and I'll get to some of my concerns about particular sections — is the role of the public being shut out in this bill. In at least two sections in the bill there are sections repealed which currently, under this act, allow for public input, either at the behest of municipalities that have an operator operating in their municipalities or at the behest of people who live in the unorganized areas who can have input when an operator goes to the MNR and asks for a permit to open up a quarry or to expand a quarry in an unorganized township. Under this bill those two sections are repealed and the input that the public used to have under this bill, albeit sometimes it was minimal in some cases because perhaps there were no concerns, and the mechanism to have input that the public used to have is taken out. I don't understand why the government would want to do that, because surely the government's role is to ensure that the public's voice is heard when it comes to determining the balance between the use of our resources among the many people who want to use them or among the many people who in fact want to protect them.

That's why I say that, at heart, our opposition comes from our fundamental disagreement with the government about its philosophy and the direction it takes with respect to natural resources, a philosophy which says the government somehow has no role any more in the province of Ontario in maintaining and protecting resources and a direction which says we will allow all of the things that we used to do to protect the public interest to now be offloaded on to the industry.

I think what the government forgets at the end of the day — and this is a most important point — is that the resources in the province, be they timber or wildlife or fish or parks or aggregates, don't just belong to this government. They don't just belong to the Minister of Natural Resources. They are not his to give away. The crown acts as the steward and provides the standards and provides the compliance and monitors that compliance and provides fines as necessary to ensure that the resources which belong to all the people are used in an environmentally sound way to benefit the greatest number of people in the province.

This government somehow forgets that. This minister somehow thinks that he and he alone has the right to say which of the big timber companies are going to get timber and how we will cut out the native groups, the independent loggers and the people in the environmental community who want to protect other values, and instead give the crown management units over to the industry. He forgets it's not his resource to give.

That again is what really bothers me about not only the business plan with respect to forestry coming under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Natural Resources but this bill as well, because these resources are not the government's to give away. They belong to all of the people of the province. The government has a role to be the steward of those resources for all of the people of the province, not only now as we use those resources or make decisions not to use them but to protect them, but also for future generations.

1740

I want to deal with some of the very specific concerns I have with the bill, and my concerns relate to really two

issues. It is that effort that I see in this bill to somehow cut out the public from participation, which is an effort on the part of the government which I do not understand and, frankly, which I find unacceptable in Ontario in 1996. It also has to do very much with the inability of the ministry to monitor, whatsoever, whatever compliance is left under the ministry's jurisdiction once this bill is passed.

Let me begin by saying that the stated rationale, as put by the minister in this House when he introduced this bill, was that the government had made it clear that they were going to do business differently in the province, that the government was somehow going to do more for less — although I fundamentally believe the government will do less for less, not only under this bill, but in terms of many of the other changes they are making to ministries that carry out regulatory functions in the province — and that finally, the industry itself will somehow become more accountable for meeting the provincial environmental standards as a consequence of this transfer of compliance from the ministry to the industry.

That's all rhetoric, because the fact of the matter is, the government right now, in the face of the huge layoffs that it has already announced, and particularly in this ministry, this ministry cannot enforce the legislated requirements that it now faces under the current act. It cannot do that as it currently stands with the changes that are going to take place and the restructuring and the downsizing that are going to take place in this ministry. I should point out again, the loss here represents 20% of all of the public servants who are going to be lost from the public service over the next two years.

So we have to bear in mind that very much the thrust of this bill is, frankly, to admit that the ministry can no longer carry out its compliance activities and they will have to be offloaded somewhere else. You see a number of sections of the act repealed to recognize that very fact. If you look at section 17 of the act, it is repealed in its entirety.

Section 17 said that once a year an MNR inspector would inspect each site, would review the site plan and the terms and conditions of the licence, and that same inspector would consider comments provided by the municipality in which the site was located to determine whether the licensee was complying with the terms and conditions of the licence, not only with respect to the terms and conditions of the licence but the site plan as well, and the regulations which would have been attached.

In discussions I had with representatives from the industry, they made it clear to me that in some cases this was not happening even under the current act, that as a matter of fact there were some sites in the province where people had not seen inspectors for three or four years already. There's no doubt in my mind that, given the huge layoffs that are going to happen at the Ministry of Natural Resources, you will never see any of those inspectors on any of these sites, because there are just not going to be enough staff to go out and provide the kind of inspection and the comments and the liaison they had with municipalities under the restructuring that's going to take place.



I think that we lose on a couple of counts. We lose because at least under the provision that is currently now in the act, an MNR inspector does have to consult with municipal representatives about the operation of the licensee. That inspector does have to talk to municipal officials about whether or not they have concerns or have received concerns about the operation of the licensee. Now the act is silent on the requirement of municipalities to have some kind of input regarding the practice of the licensee who is operating in their area. With the repeal of that section 17, the act is silent.

I say to the parliamentary assistant, what is then the mechanism for municipalities to continue to have a role in this process with respect to having some say about the operation of the licensee in this municipality? How will their input be gathered? How will we have some guarantee that if there are concerns, those concerns will be responded to? How does the public, through their municipal representatives, raise the concerns, which they have a legitimate right to raise, about the operation of a licensee in a municipality?

This is one of the sections where the government has moved to take out the voice not only of municipal representatives but of people in municipalities who use municipal representatives to raise concerns on their behalf with the ministry about operations that they may have concerns with.

I say to the parliamentary assistant, who is here, I do not understand why it is the government does not wish the municipalities to have a voice any longer. Why is it that you don't wish people in a municipality to have some kind of vehicle to raise with the government of Ontario their concerns about an operation of a licensee in this province? What is there to be afraid of? What are we worried about? Surely the responsibility of the government given that they are stewards for resources, is to ensure that the public will have the appropriate mechanisms to raise concerns about that very stewardship. This is one section of the act where that is completely removed and where the changes are now silent. I ask the parliamentary assistant how we are going to be assured that municipalities and folks in municipalities continue to have a voice and a mechanism to raise legitimate concerns they should be able to raise about an operation they have a concern with.

Secondly, in repealing all of section 17, what also happens is that the inspector who would have gone out to provide that site visit would have then been required under the act to write a report of the inspection that would include a description of any practice or procedure in contravention of the act, the regulations, the site plan or the conditions of the licence. Those reports were also required to be made available to the public.

I have a couple of concerns about this section. I want to know from the parliamentary assistant, what will be the mechanism then for reports to be made available to the public so that anyone having concerns about an operation or remedial work that should be undertaken will know exactly what it is to be undertaken?

I understand quite clearly that under the changes under that move for self-regulation to the industry what will now happen is that the industry itself or the licensee himself or herself will now have the responsibility of

filing that report, and that particular licensee will have to, under law, not only file the report, but ensure that all of the information that's provided is true and accurate and, finally, that if remedial action is to be undertaken on site, that the licensee lists when that remedial action is to be undertaken and how it will be undertaken.

I wonder how it is that the public will be able to get access to those reports. The members from the industry who came to see me had been told that the ministry inspectors would keep those on file in the MNR offices — those that will be left open after all of the changes take place at the ministry — but I want to know specifically whether those, for example, might appear as they should be, under the bill of rights, in a number of libraries across the province as they are supposed to now so that the public will be able to access those records, will be able to see clearly what action, if any, is to be taken, what date that action is supposed to be completed by and what, if any, action the ministry is going to take if the information provided is not correct or the remedial action is not undertaken at the that it's supposed to be.

I'm also very concerned about the repeal of another section; in this case, it's subsection 37(5). This section required that "An aggregate permit issued in respect of a pit or quarry located entirely or partly on land covered by water that is not the result of excavation below the water table shall contain such conditions as are considered necessary to minimize adverse impacts on or to restore aquatic biological habitat on the site."

1750

The concern I have around the repeal of this section is as follows: A number of operations, I suspect, would be pulling gravel from the bottom of a river or from the bottom of a lake, and they may well be doing that below the water table. As I understand the act at present, those licensees would receive from the Ministry of Natural Resources some terms and some conditions about how that was occurring, to ensure two things: to ensure there wouldn't be damage to the water table, which could then cause a whole series of problems to people's drinking water or to surrounding wells; and secondly, some very serious concerns to mitigate any adverse consequences with respect to fish habitat, which is also a responsibility of this ministry to assume; that is, to protect fish and wildlife in the province.

As I read this section, clearly the ministry, up until this point, saw it as their responsibility to ensure that there were terms and conditions on a licensee who wanted to operate below the water table, who wanted to operate by pulling gravel from the bottom of a lake or river. There were terms and conditions to protect the quality of drinking water and to protect fish habitat. With the entire repeal of that section, the only conclusion I can draw is that the ministry will not any longer be providing any terms and conditions and that a licensee is free to do whatever he or she wants when they're pulling gravel out of these areas.

I would think that what the government is doing by allowing that free rein is very much to put at risk both the quality of water in the water table and fish habitat, which would directly contradict one of the other responsibilities this ministry is supposed to have around protection of those same values.



I wonder if the parliamentary assistant can advise me whether that is indeed the case, or perhaps the minister can. As I read it, the repeal of the section no longer provides any obligation on the part of the licensee to protect those values. I wonder if it appears anywhere else in the act, although I did not see it. I wonder how the government is going to convince the public that a licensee operating under those very conditions will continue to be responsible for protecting those values. How is the government going to monitor compliance of those values when the terms and conditions no longer even exist, and frankly, when they no longer have the staff to go out and monitor compliance?

Part VIII of the act is also repealed. This goes back to the concern I have about this government's move to shut out the public from the process of determining balances around use of resources or the non-use of resources, or for allowing the public to have some input with respect to the concerns they may have around an operation.

Specifically, that part of the act required that an applicant for a licence for a pit or a quarry in an unorganized area must notify the public through local newspapers. It also allowed any person to serve notice of an objection to the issue of a licence. As I read the changes, that whole section has been repealed, a section which this time allowed people in unorganized areas to have some say with respect to their concerns or their agreement with an operation of a pit or a quarry in their unorganized area. The House should know that this is a serious issue.

There was a case that was most recently brought to my attention where a company did go to the MNR to try to get a permit to open up a new quarry off a road maintained by the local roads board in that unorganized area. As a result of the requirements of the act currently in place, that operator did have to issue notice and did have to hold a public meeting, which was very well attended by many of the residents who lived in that unorganized area.

It turned out that this was the same operator who some years ago had attempted to get a licence to open a quarry in exactly the same area, off that local roads board road, and he had been turned down at that time because of the severe criticism of the Ministry of Transportation, not just of the local folks who were concerned about the operation of big trucks along that road. The Ministry of Transportation itself had several years ago said very clearly to the Ministry of Natural Resources: "This is not on. The road in question cannot maintain that level of truck volume, cannot maintain that level of aggregate being moved out. There are school buses on that road, and we have concerns about safety for them and for other people who have vehicles who use the road. This is just not an acceptable area to develop a quarry."

Here we were, three years later, going through the same rigmarole, dealing with the same operator, having to have MTO intervene in the same manner to convince MNR not to provide the permit. At least in this case, under the requirements of the current act, the folks were notified by public notice, the folks had a chance to come and have their say, had a chance to raise their concerns with the Ministry of Transportation, and on their behalf the ministry officials then lobbied their colleagues at MNR and suggested that the permit be turned down.

With that section being repealed, I see no vehicle, no avenue, for those same folks to even know that someone has gone to apply for a permit at the MNR in the future. Not only will they not know, but because there is no need now to have public advertisement or to allow a mechanism for people to object, what kind of mechanism do they have to ensure that a project like the one I just referred to doesn't go through, a project that clearly, by anyone's account who is reasonable with respect to the matter, shouldn't go through? Why are we taking away a mechanism for the public to have their say, be it the public in municipalities or the public in unorganized areas? Why is it that the government doesn't seem to think that people in those areas who have concerns should have a way to raise them legitimately, should be able to stop a project when indeed a project should be stopped?

I ask the minister or the PA, who are both here, if they can tell me why it is that they see a need to take out the only role the public has in trying to deal with some of these projects, particularly when the projects very clearly should not go forward and when other ministry officials are making it clear that those projects shouldn't go forward.

I'm not sure what it is that people have to hide, but the public perception will be that operators have something to hide when they no longer have to notify the public that they want to either extend an operation or introduce a new one and when the public itself has no way to object to that.

Under the changes to the Petroleum Resources Act, there are two sections in particular that I have a very specific concern with. Under this bill, both sections 8 and 9 of the act are repealed. Section 8 stated:

"(1) No person shall,

"(a) conduct geophysical or geochemical exploration for oil or gas; or

"(b) lease oil or gas rights except from the crown; or

"(c) produce oil or gas for sale,

"unless the person is the holder of a licence for such purpose."

Section 9 stated that "No person shall operate a machine for boring, drilling, deepening or plugging wells unless the machine is licensed."

I get back to the scenario that for the public, perception is reality. The public should ask themselves why it is that the government would make a move which says it will repeal a section which now says that the person who is going to be doing any kind of geochemical or geophysical exploration at least has to be the holder of a licence for such a purpose. Secondly, what will the public perception be when people realize that the person operating without such a licence no longer has to ensure that the machine is licensed either?

What you're going to get among the public, my friends, is a perception that people have something to hide, that people are doing something wrong, that people want to make a quick buck and therefore aren't prepared to be licensed or aren't prepared to have their machines licensed and just want to get in there and do whatever it takes to make a quick buck off the resources that belong to all of us. The government has to come to grips with that, because that is an important perception, and I firmly believe that people will view it in that way.



1800

Why is it that people don't have to have a licence any more? Why is it that their machinery doesn't have to be licensed? What kind of environmental standard are we supporting by the repeal of that section?

I say to the government, you're not going to be able to convince anyone, in your move to try and offload responsibility on to the industry, that somehow that move will ensure that environmental standards are still protected when you have sections in the bill like this one, which do away with licences or licences of machinery that now are in place to protect those, I suspect, who use the machinery but also to protect those who want to ensure that the resources of the province are used in an efficient and an environmentally sound way. The government should explain to this House why it is that those sections have been repealed and why it is we want to leave the public with a perception that all we want to do in Ontario is operate at the minimum level, let everyone do whatever they want, and that the government of the day really doesn't have any respect or regard for environmental standards.

Those are some of the very specific concerns I have with respect to particular sections in the bill and it goes back to my concern about public input and the lack thereof now because of the repeal of some of these sections; and secondly, to my mind, the complete inability of the MNR staff to monitor any form of compliance under this bill. It's very clear that the bill proposes that the industry itself deal with all of the licensees, that each licensee himself or herself will do up an annual work report, will make it clear to the ministry what kind of remedial action, if necessary, they will have to undertake at their pit or quarry, will have to say when that will be done and will have to submit that. We're still not sure how that's going to be available to the public but I await some response from the minister and the PA.

It's very clear that the ministry will offload all those responsibilities on to the licensees and it's also very clear that the reason for that direction is because, as a consequence of the cuts to staff, we will no longer have 40 inspectors in the province who monitor these sites but we will have 14. That is the magnitude of the cut and that is really what is driving the change and the move to self-regulation by the industry.

I doubt that even those 14 are going to be able to monitor compliance in the province. The bill proposes — I suspect, if my reading of it is correct — that those 14 people will do audits. They will pick and choose from all the reports that come in those they might have the time to go out and inspect. I also suspect they are probably aware of who the bad apples might be in the industry and those inspectors will be looking specifically for those bad apples and those reports and will probably be out on their sites to try and monitor compliance.

But what about the rest of the industry? What happens when you have so few inspectors trying to ensure that people have respect for the law and that the law is maintained and you have those people who become even more prevalent in the industry? How does the industry respond to that? I have no doubt that most of the folks in the aggregate industry act in a responsible manner. Their livelihood depends on it. But when the ministry can't

monitor and the industry itself can't ensure that some of their friends who want to act in an irresponsible manner are going to be accountable, what kind of name does that give the whole industry? What position does that put the whole industry in if they themselves are not in a position to bring the bad apples in line?

I suspect we run a risk of that. We run a risk of that in every industry and there's no one here, nor would I expect anyone here, to be able to give me an ironclad guarantee that that's not going to happen. Because you can't give that guarantee and because it's very clear that it will be almost impossible for those 14 people to do any kind of adequate job around audits, reports, assessing, ensuring that remedial action is undertaken when it is proposed to be undertaken, I think what you will have at the end of the day are some people who will flout the law, flout the rules, flout their colleagues in the same industry because it's easier to do that and it's more profitable to do that at the end of the day.

I remain very concerned that what the government will see over the course of the mandate are those same people doing that not only in this industry, but in the forestry industry as well, and we will have on our hands before we are finished in this province example after example of where people who wanted to make a fast buck went in and destroyed their resource, to the detriment of the people who used to work at that particular site or on that particular project and certainly to the detriment of the rest of the people of Ontario, whom the resources belong to in the first place and who should be able to benefit from the proper extraction and use of those resources.

At the end of the day, that's the question this government has to answer. That's what the government has to bear in mind as it moves in this new direction of off-loading all its current responsibilities as steward and guardian for our natural resources and sets those responsibilities on to the industry so that industry representatives self-comply. At the end of the day, when those kinds of environmental problems blow up in the face of this government, this government will have to answer for that change in direction and for why it did it and for why the public has been cut out, particularly in this bill, from being allowed to have any input with respect to serious concerns that they should be able to raise with respect to an operator and how it is that the government did not assume its responsibilities to protect and maintain the natural resources for all of the people.

The member for Algoma-Manitoulin urged the government to provide to the members of the committee the technical standards that the ministry was looking at with respect to the changes in this act, and he was very correct in using the example that occurred under our government, which was, in the face of the demand from the opposition parties, to provide the technical requirements in documents with respect to the Crown Forest Sustainability Act. We did that before the hearings started so that MPPs on that committee, opposition and government, and the public who were going to come to those hearings, had a right to investigate those technical documents, had a right to ask questions. As a consequence of us doing that, those regulations and some of those technical standards were changed.



I think it is a real shame that the parliamentary assistant had to stand in his place today, because I know he wasn't part of this decision, and say that those technical standards will not be provided to MPPs as the hearings go on. In fact, it will be after the hearings and after the bill is passed that people will have the opportunity to sit down and develop those regulations, and they would be developed with the industry. What a waste of an opportunity.

If you're going to move in this direction, and you are — and I recognize that the bill will pass: I understand the numbers. If you're really going to try to assure the public that at least they have a say in this issue and that people outside the aggregate industry who have a concern about how the aggregate resource is used have had some input and some ability to make some change and have been involved in the consultation around this, you should be doing that before the bill is passed, because after it's passed and the shell of it is in place, no one will have adequate input. The bill will be long gone; the consultation will be long over; the hearings will be long done and no one who has serious concerns to be raised, which I believe should be raised, will believe they had any meaningful, adequate input with respect to this government, and they will clearly see that the whole purpose of this bill is to respond to one set of folks and one set of folks only, and that is the people who are involved in the aggregate industry.

I don't think the government, at the end of the day, wants to find itself in that position with respect to this bill or with respect to the changes they are making because of the new business relationship with the forestry industry. I urge the minister, who is here, to reconsider that situation, even though I know his House leader very clearly told our House leader that they wanted the bill passed before the House recessed this summer. I urge the minister to take a step back and develop a process which would have those regulations, technical documents and working papers in place before the committee starts to meet, so that people are not commenting on a shell, which is all they're going to be able to comment on with the bill before us, but will actually be in a position to comment upon those environmental standards that will at the end of the day be those the industry is responsible for assuming and that the government should be responsible for enforcing but I suspect won't be because of the layoffs.

1810

I encourage the minister to take a step back and do the right thing, just as he encouraged our Minister of Natural Resources to do when he was critic for MNR and when he was dealing with the Crown Forest Sustainability Act on behalf of the Tory party. I know the minister today would not want to stand in his place and not provide that information to the House when he clearly, on this side of the House, did the same when was critic for MNR. Surely he remembers all the arguments he made when he was on this side about why opposition members and members of the public should have access to those technical documents under the Crown Forest Sustainability Act. If he is going to at all follow along the line of what he did when he was over here, he is going to today tell us that indeed

he will provide those technical papers before the hearings start. I hope he will get up and say that.

Finally, in conclusion, let me just remind the government that the real problem we have with this bill is a problem that we also had with respect to the new relationship that will occur on the forestry side, and that is that somehow the government has decided that it's all right to abdicate its responsibility as the steward of natural resources of this province and that somehow it's okay to offload all of the responsibility about protection and maintenance of our resources, be they timber, fish, wildlife, parks or aggregates, on to the industry.

The government forgets that at the end of the day those resources don't belong to the Conservative Party of Ontario, don't belong to the government of Ontario; they belong to all of the people of Ontario to be used for the benefit of all of the people of Ontario. As responsible stewards in this province, the crown should continue to maintain that responsibility and maintain that protection and ensure that the rules and regulations will be met, that there will be compliance and that in fact there will be enough staff in this ministry to do that.

The problem we face is that only as a consequence of trying to fund a big tax break we've got a ministry that is being completely gutted, almost half the staff going out the door, a huge chunk of the budget that will be lost and a ministry that's going to be completely incapable of assuming any responsibility to protect the natural resources of the province. This government will have to live with that and, frankly, when those environmental problems start to spring up, as I know they will, just like the forest fire situation is raging out of control right now, it will be this government and this minister that will have to respond to that.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Len Wood:** The member for Sudbury East did an excellent job of explaining what is going to happen with Bill 52. It's a matter of firing or laying off 2,200 employees, cutting back over \$137 million in money that was used for natural resources to monitor the forestry and the aggregates industry, and now, as a result of the gutting within MNR, they find they don't have the employees and the money to do it, and they're turning over complete control to the aggregate industry and to the forest industry.

It's a sad day. I can recall very clearly reading the press clippings when Mike Harris said back in February 1995 that he was going to restore the reputation of the Ministry of Natural Resources if he ever came to government. Now 18 months later, both the Premier and the Minister of Natural Resources have completely destroyed and gutted the Ministry of Natural Resources by cutting the money and firing thousands of employees, all for the simple reason that they want to give a tax break to the wealthiest people in this province. They're not concerned at all, as the member for Sudbury East said, about protecting the resources for our children, our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren. It's just a matter of making sure the wealthiest people in this province get the tax break they want.

We can see an example in how they're letting north-western Ontario forests burn; in northeastern Ontario, the fires are starting now. They shut down the fire stations.



They don't have the personnel to fight them and they're destroying northern Ontario as a result of the action they've taken over the last 12 months.

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** I too enjoyed the member of the third party's speech. There are a few things that need to be clarified or corrected, not the least of which was the talk around the fire program. There is an emergency fire fund that kicks in over \$14 million instead of \$18 million, like previous years, so there will be dollars there to fight the fires to protect the values in the north. I think that's been evident to everyone in the province. Our firefighters are doing a great job.

I would like to comment, particularly for some clarification, about the changes we're discussing in this bill before us. The regulations we're talking about will be based on the standards. We're compiling the standards that are presently under the act and putting them in a more user-friendly form, so they're clear to the public and to the industry so they can comply. The notification and consultation part that's being put in the regulations — currently in the act it's very restrictive. By bringing in consultation, if we need to have more consultation or notification in the regulations, we'll do that.

**Mr Len Wood:** You will destroy the reputation of MNR.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Cochrane North, you'll have your turn.

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** The part about the unorganized townships: The reason that's excluded is that currently it's done solely by the MNR. In the future it'll be the onus of both the proponent and the MNR to make sure that unorganized areas are notified and the proper procedures are followed.

It's true that we find we can deliver a better product with 30% less staff. There are some things we won't be doing at all: planting of tree nurseries. We feel the government doesn't need to do that; the private sector can do it. But there are five areas we've identified that are core to the ministry and to the province of Ontario in protecting our natural resources. To do a better job, not less with less, but better with less, we've done some things that I know, when the NDP was in power, they would have loved to have done but they didn't have the influence: revenue retention around parks, revenue retention around fish and wildlife —

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. Your time has expired.

**Mr Michael Brown:** I enjoyed the speech from the member for Sudbury East. I have a quiz for her, however.

Who said, "I'd also like to state that, as I mentioned before, really Bill 171 is enabling legislation. The details are provided for in the manuals, and I've been assured that they're going to be released later on this summer, hopefully with lots of advance notice before the hearings that have been announced. As I mentioned before, the manuals will contain the nuts and bolts of how the regulations will be implemented in different forest management areas. I look forward to going over those in detail and talking to people and going to the communities that are going to be affected. We'll hold our endorsement

for this legislation until we've had a chance to review the manuals in detail and go through the public hearings"?

Well, I know who said that.

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** Howard Hampton.

**Mr Michael Brown:** Not Howard Hampton. He actually provided the manuals, he actually provided the regulations. It was said by our friend the Minister of Natural Resources. That was then, this is now. This is totally unacceptable. Put out the regulations. Put out the manuals. What are you afraid of? Let's have the public talk about this. I cannot believe my friend from Victoria-Haliburton could change his mind so radically in the space of a little more than a year. This is absolutely incredible. He's got his parliamentary assistant back there who's more worried about slot machines and extended licensed hours. Maybe you could convince your parliamentary assistant that he should have the ministry draw those regulations and bring them out here so the public can understand them. We will talk about them in committee. It will work, Minister.

1820

**The Acting Speaker:** Further questions or comments? If not, the member for Sudbury East.

**Ms Martel:** Let me very much thank my colleague from Cochrane North for his support with respect to this bill. Certainly he can talk to the minister at great length about the fire situation in northeastern Ontario these days, a fire situation which is raging out of control.

The minister can try to tell the people of the province that all is well. Yes, we support the people who are providing fire protection in the province, too. That's why we'd like the minister to rehire them, because 20 teams involving about 60 people in this province have not been recalled by this minister to fight fires as part of the \$4 million cut to firefighting his ministry is bringing in.

We would like to see the 17 of the 19 fire attack bases that have been closed by this minister to try to save \$4 million from fire protection reopened, so we don't find ourselves in the same position as the firefighters did in Gogama a couple of weeks ago, sitting in the bush for 24 hours with no food, no backup and no phone communications to either Sudbury or Timmins. I suspect that is a situation that's going to repeat itself again and again this very hot summer in northern Ontario.

I want to say to my friend from Algoma-Manitoulin, thank you very much for finding that quote for me. I appreciate it because it makes it very clear that whatever the minister said when he was on this side doesn't matter any more. That was then and this is now. This is the same individual who made it very clear that the government, our government at the time, should produce the manual so that the public and the opposition MPPs could review those and respond intelligently at the public hearings. Now he's sitting over there and he doesn't want to provide the public or the MPPs with the same kind of thing that he was demanding when he was sitting on this side.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. Your time has expired.

*Report continues in volume B.*



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Wednesday 19 June 1996

Mercredi 19 juin 1996



Speaker  
Honourable Allan K. McLean

Président  
L'honorable Allan K. McLean

Clerk  
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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 19 June 1996

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 19 juin 1996

*Report continued from volume A.*  
1822

## AGGREGATE AND PETROLEUM RESOURCES STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1996

## LOI DE 1996 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LES RESSOURCES EN AGRÉGATS ET LES RICHESSES PÉTROLIÈRES

Continuation of debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 52, An Act to promote resource development, conservation and environmental protection through the streamlining of regulatory processes and the enhancement of compliance measures in the Aggregate and Petroleum Industries / Projet de loi 52, Loi visant à promouvoir la mise en valeur des ressources, la conservation ainsi que la protection de l'environnement en simplifiant les processus de réglementation et en renforçant les mesures de conformité dans l'industrie pétrolière et l'industrie des agrégats.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Further debate? The member for York-Mackenzie.

**Mr Frank Klees (York-Mackenzie):** I think with the passion that I heard from the member for Sudbury East, we can put her down as undecided on this issue at this point. I'll be pleased to speak to that subject any time.

If I might, I'd like to add my comments to this debate and to say that the amendments to the current statutes contained in the Aggregate and Petroleum Resources Statute Law Amendment Act, 1996, will make the aggregate, petroleum and brine industries more accountable for meeting Ontario's environmental standards, contrary to what we've heard today from members opposite.

These measures are consistent with our government's determination to create jobs, to cut red tape and to streamline delivery of government services. Throughout this legislation, we will shift more responsibility for direct program delivery to the industry, making companies more accountable and more aware of their need to meet provincial environmental standards.

Throughout this debate, one of the things that has been missed is that although there will be fewer employees within the Ministry of Natural Resources, there will be a much greater involvement on the part of the industry in ensuring that there is compliance and ensuring that these standards are met. That's something that we can understand, that the previous government wouldn't understand because they didn't have that kind of trust within the industry or in the private sector.

Clearly, we take a different view of how government should be done in this province and we believe that in the

final analysis, it will be in the best interests not only of the province, not only of the people of the province, but as well, on those who are in the industry and who want to do the job right.

The Ministry of Natural Resources will then be able to concentrate on its core business of policy development, the setting and enforcement of standards and the approvals of permits and licences. This new approach, we believe, is a new way of doing business in this province, but will in fact be a much more effective way of doing business. We will simplify the current legislation and regulations that administer the aggregate, petroleum and brine industries while still enforcing the province's objectives.

The member for Sudbury East has made the statement that this province is withdrawing from enforcement in this province, and that is categorically untrue. The fact of the matter is that we believe we will be much more effective. As she admitted in her own comments, over the last five years the current section 17 has not worked. Why would we want to continue, I ask the honourable member, with a system that simply hasn't worked?

We propose through this legislation to streamline the process, to invite industry to participate with us in compliance and ensuring that there is effective compliance, and we believe we'll move from a piece of legislation that hasn't worked for anyone to one that will work for everyone.

The current legislation is too complex and it's overly detailed. The amendments we're proposing will put into place new streamlined legislation and regulations which will be backed by technical standards that are both understandable and enforceable. These new standards will be developed in consultation, as I said previously, with stakeholders and, as the member for Sudbury East indicated, all stakeholders who are affected by this legislation. We want to assure you of that. Following the development of those standards, they will be adopted by regulation.

The revised legislation will provide stronger enforcement tools than exist today. It will include increased fines and longer licence suspensions. There will be legislation, for a change, that will work, that will be effective and that will help us to enforce the standards the honourable members opposite have been calling on this government to implement. Companies, agencies and individuals under this legislation will be fully liable for their actions and will be held accountable by this ministry for their actions.

After Bill 52 becomes law, the ministry will work with industry and key stakeholders to develop the new regulations and technical standards, as I indicated, and the end result will be user-friendly standards that will be under-



stood by the industry, that all parties to this legislation will understand and will be able to work with.

This legislation also removes the requirement for an annual inspection of each aggregate licence site. In response to the member's question I want to confirm at this point that the compliance reports that will be produced will be available at the MNR district offices, as is now the case with the annual inspection reports.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Klees:** That's right, there will be. We're committed to that; the industry will be committed to that and they will be available to the public. I didn't want the honourable member to leave here tonight without having an answer to that.

In some parts of the province this requirement has made it difficult for the ministry to achieve compliance and enforce the current regulations. It means having to send inspectors every year to conduct a full inspection of sites which the ministry knows full well are in compliance and being operated properly. As was indicated before, unfortunately the ministry has not been able to devote the necessary resources to ensure compliance under the previous regulations. We believe that in cooperation with the industry, in cooperation under the terms of the new legislation which will be much clearer, much easier to understand and easier to work with, much more user-friendly, we'll be able to get on with the job the people of the province want us to do.

The new legislation will require operators to inspect their own sites according to provincial standards that we have been involved in setting along with the industry and other stakeholders. They will be required to file their own compliance report to the ministry. These reports will be reviewed and checked by the ministry in much less time that it takes to do a full inspection.

They will also be verified through regular audits. I think when you take a look at the logic of what we're proposing, it makes a great deal more sense to do this kind of inspection in cooperation with the industry and then move ahead and do the regular audits in place to ensure that the work is being done.

In addition, the new legislation will remove the many administrative and financial functions that ministry inspectors now perform. This will enable them to focus their efforts on sites where there are serious non-compliance issues.

In closing, this is a more efficient use of taxpayers' dollars. We're absolutely convinced of that. It will enable the ministry to better use its inspectors for more focused enforcement of standards and guidelines. It will help inspectors to deal with and bring closure to serious issues of non-compliance.

1830

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Questions or comments?

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** Again an example of this government choosing sides. I've listened to the comments of the member of the government who talked about the cosy relationship they have with big business in this province and I think yet again we have another piece of legislation, Bill 52, before the House that sets in place rules that are very much going to free up big

business to do what it wants in this province. That's what this legislation is all about.

In the end, who gains? You always have to ask yourself the question, when you bring legislation into this House, of who gains? We know who the winners are under this bill. They are the same as the winners in virtually all the legislation this government has done: It's big business; the people on Bay Street; the people with money; the people with power.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bisson:** Not the people of Ontario; it is the people with power at the expense of the people of this province. I think the role of a government is to advocate and pass laws on behalf of all the people of the province, not just for a select few, but again this government has chosen to fall squarely on the side of big business, squarely in the pockets of big money, and they're going to do what they need to do to repay their friends for those huge campaign contributions they got in the 1995 election and that they will get again in the election of 1999. They understand that if they want to have their bidding done, they have to have their government. They bought the government, they paid for it, they've got it, and the government is doing what it wants and is playing to a very special interest of only one sector of the economy at the expense of the environment and everything else and the people of this province, and I find that totally reprehensible.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for St Catharines.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Thank you very much.

**Mr Chris Stockwell (Etobicoke West):** What kind of rotation is this?

**Mr Bradley:** They missed the rotation, so it's okay.

When the member for York-Mackenzie rose, even though it's a bill dealing with aggregates, I wanted to hear his stand on video lottery terminals, the electronic slot machines that his party is bringing in across the province of Ontario, in all the bars that are now open till 2 am, thanks to the government, and also on golf courses; they may even have them on golf courses, because now they have beer on golf courses, but it wasn't that.

**Mr Stockwell:** What bill are we talking about?

**Mr Bradley:** The member for Etobicoke West, who is hollering from out of his seat, reminds me that we're talking about a bill dealing with aggregates.

I go back to the point. The member said, "Everything's going to be fine now; environmental protection will be even greater; the universe is unfolding as it should," yet we will not see the regulations and standards until after this bill is passed, I suspect. How can we make a judgement on the validity of this bill? I suspect it's not a bill worthy of support, but I would be much more comforted if I could see the regulations that will go with this bill ahead of time.

The best thing to do would be to put out the regulations in draft form, then make any changes after the environmentalists and others have been able to comment on them, come back with final regulations and pass the bill after that. I don't know what the hurry is other than trying to invite more people to the Tory fund-raisers, because now you'll have the aggregate industry there in great numbers, I'm sure.



**Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines):** I just want to express our thanks and appreciation for the insightful comments from my parliamentary assistant from York-Mackenzie. You've shed some light on some very important aspects to this bill that will improve the way we manage natural resources in the province of Ontario.

The bill that we're talking about today — I'd like to address one other point that the third party, the NDP, keeps referring to. There was a study done, initiated by the previous government.

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** I just want to catch their attention for a second, Madam Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please.

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** It was when the NDP was in power that this process was initiated, a study entitled *Aggregates in Southern Ontario: State of the Resource*. This was released in 1994, and the minister of the day, who is now running for the leadership, was the one who endorsed this procedure and thought it merited study and implementation. I just want to say that the comments I heard all afternoon from the member for Sudbury East — I'm sure that she was well familiar with this because this was initiated by her government.

I also want to thank the member for York-Mackenzie for his help in the consultation around this bill and all the work he's done as my parliamentary assistant and how it will make the province of Ontario better.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further questions or comments?

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** I was interested in the comments from the member for York-Mackenzie.

**Interjection:** Were you wondering about VLTs?

**Mr Michael Brown:** I wasn't really wondering about VLTs or slot machines or extending bar hours. But I was concerned that the member seems to believe that his colleague the member for Victoria-Haliburton, the minister, was wrong when he asked, on a similar bill, for the regulations and the manuals to be put out before the committee hearings so we could understand the actual substance of the legislation.

This legislation is in large part a shell. You know that, everybody knows it. It's permissive; you can change the technical standards. What we're interested in and what I think the public's interested in is what those standards are. That would be relatively simple to do. All you need to do is to put them out before the public, and if there need to be changes, the industry and members of the public can speak to that. We can get a bill that the opposition can be confident reflects the views of the people of Ontario in terms of those more technical items. That is precisely the view that was held by the present Minister of Natural Resources when he was the critic for natural resources for the Progressive Conservative Party.

Mr Hodgson and I travelled across much of Ontario hearing from people, and surprisingly, much of what we heard at the hearings related not to the legislation but to the regulations and to the manuals, because that was the only way to make intelligent, substantive comments when you dealt with the legislation. I don't understand what the problem is over there. Put the regulations out, we'll have

a little bit of hearings, and we can improve this legislation.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for York-Mackenzie, you may sum up.

**Mr Klees:** I'm speechless, absolutely speechless. I want to thank all the members who took the opportunity to comment, particularly the member for Algoma-Manitoulin and the member for Sudbury East. I want to thank the Minister of Natural Resources, with whom it's an absolute pleasure to work. I know there are representatives from the industry with us here today as well. I want to thank them for spending so much time with us in consultation around this bill, and we look forward to working with them as well as other stakeholders.

I want to assure the members opposite that the sky is not falling in Ontario. We've been hearing now since June 8 that as a result of the election of this government the sky was going to fall. The fact is, it hasn't fallen yet. I want to assure you that it's not going to fall. I want to assure you that as a result of the kind of government and the kind of legislation we're bringing into the government of Ontario, your lives and the lives of your children and your grandchildren, as you mentioned, and your great-grandchildren will be much more secure. I want to assure you that the natural resources in this province are going to be much more secure and sustainable as a result of the kind of government that we are bringing to this province.

Again, I want to thank members opposite for their contribution to this debate. We look forward to working with them in a cooperative way. I'm sure at some point they will realize that as we work together to make these things happen, it will be a much better province as a result of that.

1840

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** Madame la Présidente, I thank you. Incidentally, I had the opportunity for a brief moment about an hour back to officiate, to occupy the Speaker's seat, and it's the first time in 12 years. I can assure you that when I handed the mantle over to my successor, Monsieur Morin, everything was indeed in good order. So little time to say, "Been there, done that," but it was a privilege indeed.

You've heard the member for Sudbury East responding on behalf of our party, first informing the House that the New Democrats will not, shall not, support this legislation, for reasons that were made very clear. As always, the member for Sudbury East, in a rather unique analytical way — because she is known to always do her homework — meticulously spelled out the reasons, the shortcomings, and warned about potential pitfalls associated with this ill-fated Bill 52, this legislation presently at second reading.

It is somewhat appalling and shocking when you see the diligence — and I know some of the people; they're sitting at the back now. I wish the camera could scan and look at them. They don't, at present, look their best, but they've worked very, very hard. They responded to the command orders, to the directive, to the rule-by-clever of this government and went back to their cubicles and started hacking. They started to dismantle what has been the system that over decades — with some evolution,



some changes that were reflected in the statute — has generally served Ontarians very, very well.

The infrastructures that you see today were not built overnight. They were not commissioned, sanctioned by any individual political scribe. The need was responded to by good engineering, good money, the will of the collective to grow. We always did this in Ontario. To protect the investment made possible by the taxpayers, by all of us, we had an obligation, that of monitoring compliance, that of having checks and balances to make sure that value for money would continue to exist; in terms of the extraction of aggregate, that it would done in an orderly fashion.

We have some difficulties when we talk about deposits of gravel. They abound around the province; they're to be found almost everywhere. It is problematic that we're asking the extractor, the very people who are operating, to monitor the system.

If you were to go to Loblaw's, you wouldn't have the management inspect the meat department and ask them to report to you — not that they're dishonest, not that they would not comply; you wouldn't wish to impute motive. But simply put, it's much better to have inspections conducted by independent bodies, by people who can operate at arm's length. We've always heard about, by way of imaging, some analogy, perhaps with some validity, of Colonel Sanders being in charge of the coop. It doesn't call for a long-lasting or a very good relationship. Colonel Sanders is likely to turn to the coop and say what Henry VIII said, "I won't keep you too long."

You see, this government — truths begin to emerge — is taking us back 20, 30, 40 years, to the days of homesteading. These cowboys know no bounds. For them, a government inspector is someone who gets in the way. For them, a uniform slows things down, so they're asking the aggregate extractors and operators to monitor themselves. Don't bother.

Why are they doing it? They have a revenue problem. Their expectations, their projections, are just plainly and clearly out of whack. They have a Ministry of Natural Resources, approximately 4,300 employees, and the ministry is being gutted. Men and women are left whistling in the wind. They're being canned or given a pink slip, 2,100 of them, so fewer people to conduct your inspections, fewer guardians and sentries of the public purse.

Do they care? In front of your very eyes, when you live in that special and at this time of year vulnerable part of Ontario, the heart of resource-based northwestern Ontario, where as I speak, many dozens of forest fires are burning out of control, and as I speak, we have the irony, the cynicism, the sinister and cynical parallel of closing fire offices. Can you imagine for one moment when you would close a fire station in downtown Toronto and the city block that you were facing would be up in flames?

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** That's exactly what they're doing.

**Mr Pouliot:** That's what they're doing. If they're systematically, being aware, deliberately willing to do this, are they going to care about the quality of water? I guess not. You can always buy it on the shelf. Look for

Perrier. Will they be concerned about fish? I guess you can pick up fish at Loblaw's.

This government is doing that. They're on the hook. They've promised and they have to deliver. The masters on Bay have come calling. "Well done," said the pollster. "Well done, Mike. Good luck to you." Now the pension, checkmark, done; labour laws, delivered, done; balance the budget — oops, they're watching — to be continued to be done.

They do have a revenue problem. The money is not rolling in the way they expected it, the way they said it would. So if the money isn't rolling in, you fire people. You get seduced. You say yes because it seems to be in vogue, à la mode. That's what they're showing this spring — getting rid of 13,000, 15,000, 20,000 men and women who have been at their posts over the decades. They're not waiting for them to retire. These people are in a hurry. They're in a rush. They're gutting the system, so expect fewer services. It's as simple as that. You can't ask 20% to 25% of a workforce not to be at their posts and expect the same productivity. It cannot be done.

**1850**

To satisfy people who have been allowed by way of some effort, I agree, in circumstances, to distance themselves, to run away from the field, the most fortunate in our society; they get richer, I guess. We don't seem to have the political will to defend, to protect ourselves. The gap between the most fortunate and the middle class is widening. The middle class is shrinking.

They could have avoided it simply by being fair, simply by not responding to the temptation, to the voices of people who are closest to them, the most influential, the wealthiest in this province. Colleague after colleague in our party has reminded the government of the sad legacy they're about to leave as they leave office, none too soon.

Our critic went clause by clause, a great deal of effort, and I thank you, member for Sudbury East.

**Mr Len Wood:** Did a good job.

**Mr Pouliot:** Did an excellent job. Technically, said why the bill would not fly, why once it leaves the paper and goes to the marketplace, in the real world, it would be a burden. But this is a government which doesn't take time to assimilate, to digest, to deal with rules. These are a style and a people who rule by regulation: Do this or else. No more government to burden your daily lives. "Government" has become a word to be avoided.

Civil servants, with the help of this government, have become numbers, faces in a crowd someplace. If you write down on an application form that you are a civil servant, the government would like the employer to believe that you supply a vaccination certificate which writes "cholera, pest, typhus, civil servant," and if you write the 50 years of age — garbage, the file eternal, you'll never get drawn. You can't apply for another job or it's the proverbial buy a ticket and hope the minister picks it. It's not there.

So you play, you toy. In the meantime, the services we are paying for, like big time, are being gutted one by one. At first, some of the response was: "Well, I'm not impacted. Let's cut the fat. I'm all right, Jack," then, "I'm lucky, Jack." Now Jack gets it. Fewer services,



more pay for service, user fees, and still behind the eight-ball, still \$5.4 billion, \$5.5 billion short because lunacy entered the party. It makes little sense if you owe \$11 billion — try it yourself. You're in debt to the tune of \$50,000, plastic, you use it too often, so you've got to pay \$50,000 and they charge you 15% interest. "We'll do this together." It costs quite a bit, but you made a commitment so you're going to buy a fur coat and/or a car and you go further into debt. It doesn't make too much sense to me. You pay your debt first, you tighten up your belt, you make collective sacrifices, and when the debt comes down, is eliminated, then you reap the rewards. You don't go further into debt. It doesn't make mathematical or economic sense to me.

If you choose to do this and you have ulterior motives, you must cut more, and this is what happens: If you have fewer people, you cannot deliver or provide the service, so you say to people, "You provide it yourself." You meet I don't know where, at the office, at the Toronto Club, at the Albany Club. Most of us are oblivious to these places. We certainly don't tread there. I wish everybody well; it doesn't mean they're bad people, no, no, it's just that we don't get to those places, but we're told that they meet and that deals are consummated. They make deals; they make arrangements.

I can monitor our industry. There are only a few bad players. "We'll lean on the peers, no problem." You're talking about the aggregate group. This is very competitive. We're not turning gravel into gold here. You need the strong arm of the environment so that there is no seepage. You don't just bring a drill and start drilling and then start operating in conjunction with dump truck operators, "Hi, Harry, how are you?" More importantly: "I'm fine. Another load." You have to protect the environment to make it a better place to compete, a better place to invest.

I go back, by way of conclusion, and ask the members to listen to what my good, diligent, learned colleague said. The member for Sudbury East is a person who has monitored every step of the previous regulation. She has tried, till now without success, to provide guidance and leadership to the government in saying: "Whoops, don't do it. It's not good for the collective. It's not good for us." There's still time. It is the 11th hour; shortly third reading will descend upon us and they have the numbers. Then it will become law, something we will have to live with.

I want to thank the member for Sudbury East for her outstanding contribution — homework done, homework delivered, nothing short, nothing less.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments? Further debate? The member for Cochrane South.

**Mr Bisson:** I'm not going to take the full 30 minutes on this bill. There are parts of it that I agree with. What the government is trying to do under this bill is to take some principles we had put forward through the Crown Forest Sustainability Act and put it towards the aggregate industry, which is not necessarily a bad thing. I think the question of the trust funds, as was set up under sustainable forestry development, for remedial work in the event that companies shut down and are not around to fix the problems they might have caused is a good approach, and

it was an approach that was set up originally by the New Democratic government of Ontario under the leadership of Howard Hampton as minister.

**1900**

I have a couple of points I'd like to make by way of question to the minister, because he is here and maybe he can respond to some of that at the end in the two minutes, or at least would be able to deal with that at the point this goes to committee, if it ever does.

First of all, under subsection 6.1(1) of the act we have, "The minister may establish in writing a trust to be known in English as the aggregate resources trust." Good idea; not a bad thing to do on the surface; support the idea, as I said earlier. In itself, what it does, in short, for people who are wondering is it allows us to make sure we set up a trust fund that's outside of what they call the consolidated revenue fund, so that a certain portion of money that is made from the aggregate resources business is put into that trust fund, so in the event there are damages done to the environment after the working of that particular quarry or pit is done, we have the dollars to go and do the remedial work that's necessary. Not a bad thing.

That the money received or held by the trust fund does not form part of the consolidated revenue fund makes a lot of sense. I think that's the way you've got to do it. You've got to take it out of the consolidated revenue fund and you've got to put it under a trust. Not a bad idea.

I get to a couple of questions here in regard to subsection 11(1):

"If an application for a licence complies with this act and the regulations, the minister shall require the applicant to comply with the prescribed notification and consultation procedures."

This is a good idea, but I have a bit of a problem here, because I wonder where the regulations are to this, quite frankly. The minister of the crown today, responsible for the Ministry of Natural Resources, I remember real well when we were on committee together, travelling all of Ontario. I don't mean this to be political. I am a political animal, that's what I do for a living, as we all are within this Legislature, but I have to say to the minister in all sincerity, I look at that clause and I look for the regulations and I'm a little bit nervous about what the consultation procedures will be, because one of the things we did under sustainable forest redevelopment was we followed the suggestions of the EA on timber, which was that you had to set up citizens' committees, as we would term them, to work with industry, have people from the community involved, both from the environmental movement and from industry, come together, work with the company, work with the proposal, so we're able to identify problems before the actual project starts, so that we're able to properly address those so that we don't end up in a whole bunch of problems down the road.

I think we've learned one thing. We've learned one thing in the politics and the environment of the 1970s and 1980s. There was a time in this province, and they're probably going back to that unfortunately, where business sort of ruled the day. If they wanted to start up a project, they just went out and did it, and it was sort of a fait



accompli. Everybody agrees that business has to have the atmosphere to be able to develop projects, to be able to expand, to be able to do the kinds of things that build an economy, but you have to have some checks and balances to that.

I would just say that one thing we learned is by business going ahead and doing things without really worrying about public input, public involvement, getting the communities involved, they often backed themselves into a corner. They would end up at times starting up projects that were quite good, but didn't foresee certain problems they may have with the community, everything from the amount of sound coming from the particular plant in regard to noise that would bother residents to pollution that might be caused by their process, the aesthetics of how the plant should look. All of those issues were looked at from a dollars-and-cents issue and were never looked at from the community perspective, and business learned.

I can tell you one thing I've found out fairly quickly working in government. We had an opportunity to work with business in a way you probably can never really get unless you're the person with the bucks, the \$50-billion budget of the province of Ontario. You build a very different relationship with business when you have those kinds of dollars.

You learned that business had started to learn through the 1980s that it was really of value to involve the public early on in the construction of a project, so that they were able to identify problems way before they started, because business learned it can save money that way. It was not only good for business in the bottom line, but it was good for their corporate image, and when you're in the mining business or the aggregate business or the oil and petroleum business or whatever business it might be, your public image is probably as important as your bottom line, because you have to live with the communities your plants reside in.

When I look at section 11, it's loose. That's the point I'm getting at here. Really, it says that all of this is going to be done, but there shall be a prescribed notification and consultation procedure. I would really like to know the substance of that consultation procedure. Are we saying to the companies in this bill that you can sort of go out and do a bit of a charade and pretend you've consulted, but in the end you really get to do what you want? I think that's what most people would expect this Conservative government to do for business when it comes to the question of consultation, because they don't want to be in the face of business, but I say that sometimes you've got to drag business screaming and scratching into the 21st century.

I just give, by way of example, the mining communities. I come from a community in Timmins where basically mining is the primary industry. For years, our community has relied on mining and jobs at places like Hollinger, McIntyre, Dome, Kidd Creek and all those mines that were out there.

Growing up in a mining community in the late 1950s, early 1960s, as a youngster, we were told in school, "If you don't do well, you're going to end up working in a

mine." What's wrong with that? Mining is a great business to work in. Mining is a great industry.

**Mrs Janet Ecker (Durham West):** Why are you here?

**Mr Bisson:** I come from the mining industry; that's where I come from. But the point I'm getting at — just hear what I'm trying to say here — is that the mining industry was not trying to show itself as a progressive industry and an industry that was really something special and something that was technologically fairly advanced. They were more concerned about finding the ore and developing it, getting the dollars to do the development and then extracting the ore.

They weren't worried about public image, but that public image they didn't worry about came back and crept up and got on them, because at one point people started saying, "Hold it a second, things aren't being done the way they should," and people, rightfully so, demanded concessions from the companies through government to make sure they did their job well.

Mining learned through the late 1980s and certainly into our term, 1990-95, that it had to reposition itself with the public and the mining companies and the exploration companies had to go out there and sell themselves to the public as being the important industry that it is for the economy of Ontario, because it certainly is that, but more importantly, that it is a high-tech industry, that it is an industry that has everything from technicians to engineers to workers to you-name-it. It is a very highly technical industry that takes a lot of skill to work in, and they started to sell themselves.

I remember when Save Our North was started in Timmins with people like Steve Perry and others, people like Dave Meunier and Bruce Geoffreys and a whole bunch of people up in the Timmins area. They really at that point started to do the sort of evolving that they had to do as an industry to show themselves for what they were, because if you don't position your industry well with the public and you don't show yourself to be progressive and you don't show yourself to be something that is really unique and something special, you have a much more difficult time trying to do other things, like recruiting people into your communities to work in that industry. The whole issue of even raising dollars on the market is a lot more difficult in certain circles if you don't do that.

Section 11: You really should put some meat on the bone. Minister, when you were in opposition — and now I will put my political hat on — you were pretty dogged on committee, travelling one end of the province to the other, making the point, rightfully so, that you needed to see the regs and you needed to see the manuals and eventually that's what the government did. I would certainly hope you meant what you said back then and I would certainly have thought if you had become Minister of Natural Resources you would come forward and follow on the principles you enunciated when you were in opposition. I'm a little bit disappointed that you haven't done that, but for another day.

Moving on to subsection 11(3), it says, "Any person may, during the prescribed consultation procedures, notify the applicant and the minister in writing of an objection to the application." All right? You say that's all right, but



then you read on to subsection (5) and it says, "The minister may refer the application and any objections to the board for a hearing, and may direct that the board shall determine only the issues specified in the referral."

I understand why the government is doing this. They're saying, "Listen, we don't want the board to be all-consumed with all kinds of issues that don't have anything to do with the application or don't have anything to do with the project." But I think those are pretty strong powers in the sense that a board that is handpicked by the minister, who is pro-business — this is what is going to happen in the end: This board is going to be appointed by this government and this government is a pro-business government. Who do you think is going to sit on that board? It's certainly not going to be people from the environmental movement. It will not be people who are seen as the warm and woollies of society. It is going to be hard-nosed business people who look at the bottom line.

1910

The problem we're going to get into is that the minister can limit what goes before the board in regard to objections to a project. I'm not very trustful of the government, because I feel it is speaking for its big business friends. They have not demonstrated to me in the first 12 months of their government that they really care about the people of this province in the sense of recognizing that legislation —

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** Hope not.

**Mr Bisson:** I'm just saying, recognizing that legislation is all about making sure that you strike a balance of protecting the public interest at the same time as allowing economic development to happen. This government is looking at it from the other particular perspective.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bisson:** OPAP was good, but what you did was reannounce a program that we, the NDP, had made sure stayed in place and funded, but OPAP had been cancelled originally until you realized that it was mistake. But anyway, for another day.

To get into this, the government will make a very logical argument: You need to be able to narrow down what you bring before the board and you've got to be businesslike when you go before the board and deal with the objections. The problem is that you have to recognize that the minister appoints the board and the board is going to be hard-nosed business people who look at this from the bottom-line perspective. People who have sometimes not the sophistication of people who work before boards all the time are going to be coming forward, and number two, they won't have the bucks of big business, are going to be at a disadvantage in trying to put their cases before the board.

I worry about that, because I know, as you in government know, that the people who normally come before governments, ministers and MPPs and eventually go before these boards are not sophisticated, with a whole bunch of bucks. It's somebody in a community who has a concern. It's the mother down the street who is worried about where an aggregate pit quarry is going to be and the safety of her children. She doesn't have the wherewithal to be able to understand all the technicalities and

legalities of dealing with the question of an appeal, so you have to be somewhat permissive before these boards. I make that comment —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bisson:** I hope you are listening to this. I hope that in the end the minister looks at this and tries to make sure he's able to restore the confidence of the people by allowing a little bit more latitude about how we come before the boards. It saves money; there's no question about that. This will save money for the people who are going before the boards and it will take less time; there's no question about that. There will be an efficiency; I admit to that. But the tradeoff is that we are limiting certainly — I wouldn't say rights of people, but the ability to argue those arguments that need to be made to make that project better.

The other part is subsection 8. This is a recurring theme in the government, and I will explain. It says: "The board may hold a hearing and direct the minister to issue the licence subject to the prescribed conditions" — I'll come to that in a second — and it talks about what you can and can't bring before the board again. It says, "If the board is of the opinion that an objection referred to it is not made in good faith, is frivolous or vexatious, or is made only for the purpose of delay, the board may, without holding a hearing, on its own initiative or on a party's motion, refuse to consider..."

This is what we saw in Bill 26. The government, in its glee to be able to say, "We're a big business government, we're a business type of government, we will deal with this from the bottom line and bring sound business practices to government," is forgetting that part of what you need to do is, yes, be efficient but also that government is of the people and that the people have to have the ability to come before the government and petition it, be it at the level of the members in regard to the politicians or at the level of the board.

To say you're not going to allow it on the grounds of its being vexatious or frivolous, who determines that? You know as well as I do, the 130 members of this assembly, that you at times have people come into your constituency office and your staff will say to you, "Oh, this guy wants to come in and see you," or "This woman wants to come and see you. Jeez, I'm not sure you should meet with this person. They're a little bit kind of weird, you know." They sometimes will tell you that. I've always learned as a member that you meet with people and you sit down and hear what they have to say, no matter what, because sometimes people, in the way they present issues, may come off as being a little bit odd but there is substance to their complaint and you need to be able to deal with it.

Sometimes I've been quite tried in trying to deal with some constituents when they bring an issue forward because they don't know how to present their case. They don't know how to explain what it is they need to do and go on at length, sometimes for hours, trying to tell you what really could have taken a couple of minutes. But you need to sit down and hear them none the less. That's always been what I have done, and I have learned there's value in that. If you allow the board to say, "It's vexatious, it's frivolous," you're really giving into the hands



of people on a board who will be appointed by a pro-business government, and it will be business types of people who look at this from a bottom-line perspective, who will be turning around and will be looking at this from a bottom-line perspective and may not look favourably upon the application of people —

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound):** Gilles, slow down.

**Mr Bisson:** Madam Speaker, he shows up in the House about once a week. Do you think maybe he can listen to the debate? Thank you.

That's part of the problem. You saw the question of vexatious —

**Mr Murdoch:** That was a nice one. You were here Monday; no, you weren't. You weren't here the other day.

**The Acting Speaker:** Would the House come to order, please. The member for Cochrane South.

**Mr Bisson:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. The question of "vexatious and frivolous" as options to be able to limit the ability of people to come before tribunals is something we have seen this government do time and time again. We've seen it in Bill 26, we're seeing it today under Bill 52, we saw it in other pieces of legislation, because this government believes that you have to have a businesslike attitude when dealing with government.

Yes, you've got to be more efficient; there's no question about that. But you cannot limit democracy in what you do here. You have to look at that and remember that your job is to speak on behalf of the people of this province and to allow them due process under the law — and this is what this is — to deal with their complaints. To say that you're going to dismiss something on the basis of its being vexatious or frivolous, who is the judge, jury and executioner?

**Mr Bradley:** Mike Harris.

**Mr Bisson:** It's going to be Mike Harris, exactly. It'll be Mike Harris, it'll be the cabinet of this government and their friends from big business they appoint to this board, who look at things from the same perspective. That is a problem, that is a limitation of democracy and I have a real problem with a government that takes that particular approach.

**Mr Bradley:** I'll feel more secure if Stockwell's in cabinet.

**Mr Stockwell:** Don't hold your breath.

**Mr Bisson:** Yes, if my friend Chris Stockwell goes into the cabinet, I will be somewhat surprised, to tell you the truth.

Getting back to the other part of the bill, I was noticing in the explanatory notes of the act, under paragraph 6 at the bottom in the first part, it says: "Inspectors are authorized to make a variety of compliance orders. The minister is authorized to certify other persons to examine works and wells."

I am wondering, is the minister saying here that this means that the inspectors of that industry who are normally paid — and I look at the people from the ministry who are in the wings over here — does that mean that in the end you're able to contract out the inspectors of the ministry who are now doing the job

over to the private sector? I'm looking for a nod; no or yes? No? Okay. I thought that's what you were getting at. You're not political staff, are you? You wouldn't be doing that just to try to — okay, all right.

I understood. I would ask if the minister can just, for one second — I'm about to wrap up and I want to ask you a question, so I would appreciate, since you are here, to be able to get that. Under the Petroleum Resources Act it says, under paragraph 6 in the explanatory notes: "Inspectors are authorized to make a variety of compliance orders. The minister is authorized to certify other persons to examine works and wells." Does that mean to say that you're allowed to privatize the services presently being done by ministry inspectors, that work?

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** Yes.

**Mr Bisson:** Hang on. The political staff over here said no. You'd better talk to the political staff over there.

I'm going to go on for another couple of minutes then. I was about to end at that point. I respect the minister. The minister must be truthful in the House and he answered the question squarely. The answer is yes. I understand it is a question of political ideology.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bisson:** No, you did the right thing. You were truthful. I respect that and I thank you for giving me a straight answer. I just say that government has an ideology; there is no question. They believe that the private sector can do it better, and if they can move over many of the services that are presently delivered by the government into the hands of the private sector, they have a fundamental belief that things will be better in Ontario, they have a fundamental belief that things will be done in a more efficient way.

I say to the minister and the members of the assembly that there is a problem with this concept. Well, it's not a concept; it's now a fact in Ontario, because that's what you're doing. You're privatizing not only this, but a whole bunch of other things in Ontario. We as a government, we as a people in this province have the ability —

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please.

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**Mr Bisson:** We in this Legislature have a responsibility to the people of this province, and one of the responsibilities is the question of accountability, that people in the end, if they have a complaint to their government, if they are unhappy about how policy has been carried out in the province of Ontario, are able to complain directly to the government of Ontario through the political process or they're able to get to the bureaucrats through other processes. That is part of how the system works.

We're fairly quick to blame the civil servants for all our ills and wills, but in the end, the civil servants, the people that are the inspectors, are there to do a job and that job is to look at the bill that has been drafted by the members of this Legislature, the bill that is the responsibility of the minister, and to make sure that the public policy set out in the bill is carried out. If the bill calls for fines, if the bill calls for any kind of punitive measure, that is the responsibility of the government employee, as the inspector. We shouldn't get mad at them. We should get mad maybe at the legislation or how it was drafted,



and if we want to deal with that, deal with it in the legislation.

But by simply transferring the responsibility over to somebody in the private sector, there are two great problems, in my view. The first one is that public policy is not as easily dealt with because the private sector individual is not so much concerned about public policy. They are concerned about the bottom line, as they should be.

I ran a business for years in my community and what did I worry about? I didn't worry about what happened in my neighbourhood, I worried about making sure I had enough money to pay the bills at the end of the week. That's what business is all about. You're worried about making a profit so you can build that money back into your business to make a better and more successful business. That's what you're concerned with. You're not worried about public policy.

By transferring the responsibilities of inspectors and putting it squarely in the hands of the private sector, there's a problem with that. Public good is not being followed. Public will, in my view, is not being done. What you end up with on the other side, it becomes more difficult for the public to be able to get at them in the sense of being able to bring forward complaints and being able to get action on complaints because they are a private sector entity that is responsible unto no one but the business owner. Yes, there are regulations and law that will deal with what they can and can't do, but in the end, they're not as accountable as people in the public sector and that's why we decided years ago in a thing called a democracy, something that this government forgets we have, that we put those responsibilities squarely in the hands of the public sector so there is public accountability.

The other issue, by transferring the service from the ministries on to the private sector, who benefits? I have to come back to that all the time. Because where a ministry inspector — and I use the Ministry of Mines as something people back home will understand. The mining inspector who goes out and does the inspection in the mines in regard to what is happening as far as safety is probably being paid somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$16 to \$21 an hour, depending on what his or her job is. Then that person, in doing that job, takes the income and reinvests it in the community by buying goods and services in that community.

What's going to happen in the private sector? That inspector who used to make between \$16 and \$21 an hour will now make probably on average about 10 bucks an hour. And who benefits? Certainly not the worker. The worker who made money is going to lose his or her job or, if they're lucky enough to hang on to it, will be paid considerably less. So who benefits? The business owner. Are there more business owners than there are workers? That's the question. There are more workers than there are business owners and it seems to me, from an economic perspective, we're better to pay workers a fair wage for the work they do so that they have disposable income to make our economy go.

Part of the problem is that the government doesn't believe in that concept. They're transferring that all over

to the private sector, which means to say that workers will be paid less money. I then come back to the point, who benefits?

On the surface, under Bill 52 there are parts of this bill I can support. There are parts of this bill in regard to what we're doing with the aggregate resources trust that are a good idea. It is something we set up in government under Howard Hampton. It is something I think is workable, something that we've demonstrated has validity in regard to process and how it is able to relate to everything else. But there are a number of things that are shy and lacking, I would say to the minister, as to how that is going to operate in regard to public accountability, both in the ability to appeal and, on the other side, in the ability to be able to be involved at the head end of the process.

I would just say in closing, there was a comment that was made this afternoon as I listened to the answers from the Minister of Natural Resources to the questions that were posed in regard to forest fires in northern Ontario. Somebody called him the Nero of Ontario, and he's right. What we have in this province is a very critical situation of forest fires in northern Ontario at this point, and the ministry has always had the ability to respond, sometimes not as well as it would like to, depending on the severity of the fires and how many are going on, but we've always had the ability to keep it in check, and this minister has presided over the dismantling of our capability to be able to fight fires in northern Ontario. I say, as Nero watches northern Ontario burn, we are going to see jobs go up in smoke, because as you burn them trees it means to say you can't get them back as a resource. It means to say we're going to put the existing firefighters at risk.

I know of constituents of mine, and I'm very angry, who are firefighters, who were stuck in the bush for 24 hours without communication, without food, without contact to the other firefighters, and if something had happened, quite frankly, the blood would have been on the hands of the Minister of Natural Resources.

#### *Interjections.*

**Mr Bisson:** You don't like it, but listen. You better wear what you put on in the morning, because what you people have put on is a cloak of cuts that has nothing to do with the ability of this province to be somewhat compassionate and respond to issues.

I warn you now, Minister, if any of the people who are working out there fighting fires this summer get in additional danger in regard to their safety and, God be it, if one of them happens to die because of it, I will be coming to this Legislature along with everybody else in northern Ontario and not only demanding your resignation, but we'll be demanding a lot more from you, because that is unconscionable what has happened.

We're flying people in from the United States to fight fires when we've got people who are unemployed in northern Ontario who did it as a living, who understand how to do it and have been trained by this province. I say to the minister, that is not acceptable. There is a question of priorities and there are choices that this government has to make, and I understand that and I accept it. I was part of a government that cut budgets in certain areas in regard to being able to find efficiencies.



But at one point you've got to look at common sense and say you can't shut down the fire station in downtown Toronto and expect the community to survive. That's what those fire stations were for us in northern Ontario. It is our resources and it is our backyard. It is where we live, and it's a question of safety. I say to the minister, shame on you for what you have done. I will be back here along with a whole bunch more people if anything else happens on that matter.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments? The member for Victoria-Haliburton.

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** In the interests of time, I'll be quick on this. I appreciate the member's comments about the positive things in the bill. The private inspectors that he brings up will augment the inspectors who are employed directly by the MNR.

His remarks on the fire situation are purely unconscionable. I think he should talk to the former Treasurer, somebody who understands financing in the government. You have an emergency fire fund. There are dollars, there are resources there. When the former finance minister asked his question in the House a week ago, he preambled that the people who were training last year and we thought we'd let go were hired back. Their party is aware of that. He is fearmongering with the people of northern Ontario.

Our firefighters are doing an excellent job up there. They're doing the best they can. It's a severe situation. There are dollars being spent. Last year we spent \$110 million on a base budget of \$18 million. This year we're saying if we had had a traditional year, we could have provided the service for \$14 million. We are on emergency fire. We spend about \$1.25 million per day of the Ontario government's money and that is to meet the challenge that exists there.

As far as safety, that is the number one concern, and if the member tries to make politics around safety, I think that's truly unconscionable and despicable, to be honest with you.

The closing of the attack bases that their party likes to rage on about is because we've had changes in the way we deliver fire protection. We no longer sit in towers. The attack bases now are highly mobile. If you want to go for a tour in the northwest where there's a huge fire activity right now, there are nine bases that are located closer to the fire. It's more effective for fire suppression and initial attack. It's a mobile force now. We're approaching the 21st century and we have communications, we have better lightning monitoring. Our firefighters are the best in the world and they're proving it every minute as we sit around here and idly chat.

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**Mr Michael Brown:** I was interested in the comments from the member for Cochrane South, as always, and particularly interested in the minister's comments. I thought he would be standing up to announce that the regulations would be in place for public comment before we dealt with this bill.

The minister mentioned the fire situation and I just want to quote from his estimates of this year. In his estimates he says: "... Ontario government restructuring initiatives by consolidating the forest fire regions; con-

solidating forest fire attack bases; reducing staff including fire crews;" this I really like, "reducing the fire detection effort; reducing helitack contracts and developing partners for the delivery of forest fire prevention messages.

"Development and design an alternative funding mechanism for forest fire management.

"Refine the level of forest fire protection to allow for the continued delivery of key program objectives:

"prevent the injury or the loss of life and property;

"protect natural resource values; and" — this one I really like and you're going to enjoy this. It says, "promote the use and understanding of the beneficial role of fire in ecosystem management."

In other words, this is kind of like the NDP answer to forest regeneration. When they found they didn't have the dollars to do it, they decided that natural regeneration was the way to go. Now we have a minister who can't fight fires and has decided that fire is a good part of the ecosystem and so we'll just let it burn.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I want to commend my colleague from Cochrane South for the comments that he made on Bill 52 this evening, particularly spending the time to go through item by item and section by section on some of the changes the government is making. He made it very clear during the process that there were a number of sections in which now the public no longer has the input or the ability to make comments, as they used to, when they wanted to be critical of licensees' operations. For example, in some of the sections that I referred to earlier, the municipality no longer has that opportunity through section 17, and in unorganized areas, despite what the minister tried to say in response to me, the act is very clear. The section where it says there will be public notification by an operator to people in unorganized areas with respect to the operation of a new quarry or expansion has been repealed and there is nothing to replace it.

Regardless of the fact that the minister stood in his place today and said somehow the ministry is going to work with the operators to ensure the public is notified, nowhere in the bill does that provision for public input and a way to reflect public concern and a vehicle to have the same ever appear. Maybe he would like to get one of his other colleagues to comment on that if they get up to speak on this bill.

But I want to just follow on the fire situation because I heard the minister try and justify \$4 million worth of cuts to fire protection by trying to say there have been changes in the way we deliver fire protection. I want to remind the minister that he has closed the fire base at Nym Lake in Atikokan and he now expects fire crews from Fort Frances, which is an hour away, to respond to fire protection concerns in Atikokan and to the two mills that are located in Atikokan. There is no fire equipment located in Fort Frances. If you have to bring a helicopter in to transport people, you have to first get the helicopter to Fort Frances, then load the crews, then bring them to Nym Lake. By the time you finish doing that, the two mills in Atikokan will have burned down. If that's his idea of adequate fire protection changes, then he's out to lunch.

**Mr Stockwell:** Having spent some time in this place during the socialist regime of 1990-95, I recall vividly the



original minister who in fact introduced this whole streamlining and economizing and it was one Howie Hampton, as I recall. Howie Hampton was the gentleman who in fact decided we had to do a study to streamline, to determine how to deliver these services less expensively. He did the study and then he said, "Gee, you know, we should do more than just a study. We should institute some pilot projects," in I think it was three pits about the province of Ontario. So what happened? The good minister of the day, Mr Howie Hampton, said, "Let's institute the pilot projects," and we went ahead and instituted the pilot projects to see about streamlining the cost of delivery of this service, which we thought was a grand idea. Many people in this Legislature in fact complimented the member and the deep thinkers on the other side that this might be a good idea: "We've got to streamline. We've got to look for economizing. We've got to look to efficiencies." When the socialists were in power, this is how they talked, and what happened? We had the three pilot projects. They realized, "Hey, we can find some savings." Ergo, the legislation, the legislation that we're debating today to implement the legislation that Howie Hampton himself said we needed to do.

I know very well that the member for Sudbury is briefing the member for Cochrane South right at this very moment, defending the good Howard Hampton, but let's be clear. What came out of this was a direct result of the socialists in power who said the costs were excessive, we need to economize. They did the study, they did the pilot projects, and this came forward, yet we're standing in this place and they're arguing against the wisdom and common sense of one Howard Hampton. Unbelievable.

**Mr Bisson:** To the member from Etobicoke, I would only say that Howard is so wise and so knowledgeable and so practical that I'm supporting him as leader, so that's my response to you.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bisson:** I just say to my friend Mr Stockwell, if you had listened to what I said in the speech, I said I support the principle of the bill. It builds on, I said, the work that Howard Hampton had done. I had no problem with the direction the government was taking. I raised issues in regard to the issues of how people get involved in the process up front, in regard to identifying problems such as we did —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bisson:** Sure, we did. That's what we did in our bill, and then in regard to the question of appeals are some of the process issues that I talked about.

To the minister I say this — the minister turned around and he said, and this is a recurring theme every time the opposition raises something, it's a question — that's cute. I like that. It's a Lankin delegate button he just gave me.

Anyway, the point is that every time the government ministers get up and when the opposition raises some issue that is contentious for the government, they say "fearmongering."

Minister, you are the one, by the very fact of your policy, who is dealing with fearmongering in this province. There are people in northern Ontario who are quite concerned and are quite fearful of what you're doing as a government when it comes to the question of firefight-

ing in northern Ontario. We have diminished our capacity to do that because of your actions as a government and your actions as a minister, and you can't get away from it. You've shut down 17 of the centres, we have less capacity to fight fires, and people are being put in danger. You are causing the fear by your policy, not this opposition.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate? Seeing none, would the minister like to sum up?

**Mr Stockwell:** Wrap up.

**The Acting Speaker:** Wrap up, if you prefer, member for Etobicoke West. Would you like to wrap up?

**Hon Mr Hodgson:** Very much, Madam Speaker. In the interests of time — we have a long evening ahead of us — I think we've had a full debate on this.

**The Acting Speaker:** Mr Hodgson has moved second reading of Bill 52. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

Those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**Mr Ed Doyle (Wentworth East):** It's my understanding that we have unanimous consent to delay this until after question period on Monday, June 24.

**The Acting Speaker:** Agreed? Agreed.

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#### CROWN FOUNDATIONS ACT, 1996 LOI DE 1996 SUR LES FONDATIONS DE LA COURONNE

Ms Bassett, on behalf of Mr Eves, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 71, An Act to encourage the financial support of Public Institutions by Individuals and the Private Sector through the establishment of Crown Foundations / Projet de loi 71, Loi visant à encourager le soutien financier des établissements publics par les particuliers et le secteur privé grâce à la création de fondations de la Couronne.

**Ms Isabel Bassett (St Andrew-St Patrick):** Bill 71, the Crown Foundations Act, 1996, allows for the establishment of crown foundations by public hospitals, public libraries, the Ontario Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation, the Ontario Arts Council, the Royal Ontario Museum, the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Royal Botanical Gardens. Certain other public institutions may also qualify for crown foundation status, such as the National Ballet of Canada, the Canadian Opera Company, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the Shaw Festival and the Stratford Festival.

As the government continues to restructure, every organization in this province must look to new ways of raising funds. We are very much aware of the financial needs of public institutions, of hospitals and cultural institutions, just as they are aware of the government's limited resources at this time.

Although we don't have the economic flexibility to continue to increase public funding to these institutions, we can give them the legislative tools they need to raise additional funds by encouraging public donations. Bill 71 is one of those tools. The Crown Foundations Act will give public institutions an essential tool to attract major



gifts and donations from individuals and the private sector.

Crown foundations provide incentives to donors to make large donations relative to their annual income. Although tax incentives do not influence whether or not a person gives, they do influence how much a person gives. By giving to a crown foundation, donors will be able to claim a tax credit of up to 100% of the value of their gift up to the level of their annual net income. For donations to a charitable foundation, donors can only claim tax credits for gifts of up to 50% of their annual net income.

In short, by donating to a crown foundation rather than to a charitable foundation, donors will be able to claim a much larger tax credit for large gifts relative to their net income. This encourages people to make larger donations.

The bottom line is that crown foundations work. You only have to look to Ontario universities to see evidence of that. Since crown foundations were established for universities in 1992 by the NDP government, 17 Ontario universities have set up their own crown foundations. Many have already raised million of dollars from individuals and the private sector, money that in some cases would probably not have been given were it not for the crown foundation.

For example, in my own riding of St Andrew-St Patrick, the University of Toronto has raised more than \$40 million through its crown foundation. Almost \$24 million of this is in cash donations, including an individual donation of \$10 million. Much of this money will be used for research and education in the university's five teaching hospitals.

The crown foundation also received a gift of 860 acres of land in the Oak Ridges moraine, known as Joker's Hill. This ecologically sensitive area will be used by students of earth sciences and those in the botany department as well.

The University of Western Ontario has also benefited from its crown foundation by raising more than \$6 million this year alone, including its new business school, the Richard Ivy school of business.

These are only two examples, but there are many more. But one thing is for certain. Both the University of Toronto and the University of Western Ontario feel strongly that these donations would not have been received if it had not been for crown foundations.

One of the main reasons for expanding crown foundations to include hospitals and cultural institutions is to level the playing field with universities. Since they are all competing for scarce charitable dollars, allowing only universities to have crown foundations puts hospitals at a major disadvantage. Just ask any hospital administrator.

Expanding crown foundations to include other publicly funded institutions will also help make them more competitive with provinces across Canada which have already given crown foundations to hospitals, which are attracting donations from here in Ontario.

Currently, there is a greater tax incentive for Ontarians to make large donations to hospitals in British Columbia and Manitoba because Ontario's hospitals do not yet have crown foundations. When an Ontario donor gives money to a hospital outside Ontario, we all lose. Ontario tax-

payers lose tax revenue from a gift that is not even benefiting an Ontario institution and hospitals lose out on money that they so desperately need. Bill 71 will not only put hospitals and cultural institutions on a level playing field with universities, but it will work to keep Ontario's charitable dollars right here in Ontario to help support public institutions for the benefit of all Ontarians.

While this government initiative is a positive step, we fully realize that this legislation is not a panacea and certainly is not a substitute for provincial support of our own hospitals and cultural institutions. But it does help. I can tell you that those public institutions which will qualify for a crown foundation are looking forward to the expeditious passage of this legislation. In fact, I've been absolutely overwhelmed by the amount of public support for this legislation from hospitals, cultural organizations and libraries right across the province.

I have met and spoken with representatives from over 50 public institutions in Ontario, from small, regional organizations like the Buckhorn library and the Fort Frances library to large provincial institutions such as the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Hospital for Sick Children and the Ontario Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation, which all support crown foundations. Their support in fact is unanimous. I have yet to receive even one phone call or letter against in any way the concept of crown foundations.

The Ontario Hospital Association and the Association for Healthcare Philanthropy have been strongly advocating this legislation since the university crown foundations was established in 1992, and they are not alone. The list of supporters goes on and on. In fact, just last week, the new president of the Ontario Hospital Association, David MacKinnon, said that he is pleased with the legislation because it "will put hospitals on a level playing field with universities and cultural organizations in terms of being able to access significant donations for much-needed infrastructure and research initiatives in the Ontario hospital system."

During our consultations, both hospitals and cultural institutions told us that they wanted flexibility to establish their own individual crown foundations. Because identity with a particular institution is integral to an organization's ability to raise charitable donations, most institutions prefer individual foundations to the central crown foundation used elsewhere. Bill 71 will allow hospitals and certain cultural institutions to establish their own crown foundation.

In most cases, setting up and administering a crown foundation will cost public institutions very little or no money at all. This is because crown foundations are not intended to replace an institution's charitable foundation. A crown foundation is nothing more than a legal mechanism for processing large donations relative to a person's income.

A donation to an institution that is less than 50% of the donor's annual net income will continue to be processed as a charitable gift rather than as a gift to the crown, because the federal government, in its last budget, now allows donors to claim tax credits for charitable donations of up to 50% of their annual net income. While the number of taxpayers who are able to make generous



donations is not large, experience with Ontario universities which already have crown foundations shows that the value of their gifts can be very significant in individual cases.

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Those who don't support crown foundations may argue that expanding crown foundations to include other public organizations will cost too much money. But when other provinces around us are introducing crown foundations for their own public institutions, can we afford to lag behind? Clearly, the answer is no.

Besides, we are not losing money because most large donors would not be making these gifts without this more favourable tax treatment. Depending on the size of a donation to a crown foundation, the cost to the province in lost personal income taxes will range from 10 to 22 cents for every dollar donated. On a donation of \$1 million, the province would lose \$100,000 to \$220,000 in lost tax revenues from a \$1-million gift that it will be receiving.

The bottom line is that everyone benefits from crown foundations — donors, the public institutions receiving the donations, but most of all the taxpayers who rely on the services and programs offered by these institutions.

I fully support crown foundations and I thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Questions or comments?

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** It was interesting to hear the member make that speech this evening. I know she is very much committed to this bill and has looked forward to its presentation.

I will have an opportunity a little later on to spend a little extra time discussing the bill and the ramifications of it. I want to indicate that you may not be surprised to know that the opposition will be supporting this bill. We are not always those who oppose everything. We like to look at each piece of legislation as it comes forward, judge it on its merits and then make a decision.

Unlike the previous bill, where we will not have the regulations and the standards for the aggregates and petroleum acts that we talked about, this does not have too many regulations to go with it. They're not the kind of regulations, in any event, if they need regulations, that require a good deal of public scrutiny and hearings.

On that basis, we feel it is a supportable bill. I will get into the details as to why we're having this bill presented in the Legislature a little later on in the evening. But I wanted to get it on the record initially that there will be support for this legislation.

Certainly, for those who wish to make donations, this will make it easier for certain institutions to be able to receive more money. Heaven knows they'll need that more money because of the considerable cutbacks that are taking place as a result of the policies of this government. It will nevertheless allow that opportunity.

We in the opposition would certainly not want to debate this bill at great length because when it is supportable, there's no need to go into detailed scrutiny of the bill, but we feel it would be necessary to point out why it is being brought forward and its real ramifications for the province. I'll be happy to do that, as may some of my colleagues, as we get on into the evening.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** I'm going to take a grand total of two minutes on this bill by way of this response. I support what the government is doing in regard to the bill. What it's going to do for those agencies is offset to a certain extent the damage the government is doing by the cuts to these agencies. I would only say that all of this would not be necessary if the government were not attacking these agencies by removing, in some cases, almost all of their funding through the cuts it's effecting in its guise to pay for the tax cut.

I will support this bill — I can't speak for other members of my caucus — on the basis that we've got to do something to help these agencies deal with the fiscal conditions the government is setting on them. This is certainly a better alternative to nothing, but the government is really shirking its responsibility when it comes to those agencies by pulling the funding.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further questions or comments? Seeing none, the member for St Andrew-St Patrick, you can sum up.

**Ms Bassett:** I have no further comment. I would like to thank the honourable members on the opposite side for their support. I think all of Ontario will benefit.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Bradley:** I see the clock is not to 90 minutes yet. There it is; one hour and 30 minutes. I do not intend to speak for an hour and 30 minutes.

The Crown Foundations Act, as it is referred to, is welcome in that the circumstances facing various institutions in this province are desperate at this time. I would refer to this bill as a conscience bill; that is, we would not be seeing this bill coming forward, I suspect, if the government had not cut so deeply the budgets of public institutions across this province.

The bill allows the establishment of crown foundations by public hospitals. If we all think of the hospitals in our part of the province — I think particularly of St Catharines as a good example — we find out that our hospitals are being cut back considerably. Even the MRI, which I used to raise in the House almost weekly, that will be approved or has been approved for a couple of years down the line for the St Catharines General Hospital will cost the provincial government very little. The local community will have to have \$5 million in terms of making the adjustments at the hospital and purchasing the equipment, and then will receive only \$150,000 per year for the operation of this machine. Of course, it will cost considerably more money to operate it. St Catharines General Hospital will have to find that money out of a budget that is being cut by some \$9 million.

When we see these cuts to public hospitals across the province, we understand why the province is going to bring forward a bill which it hopes will somewhat alleviate some of the concerns of the hospitals. A little later on, I'll get into why this bill will make only a marginal difference.

This of course will be supported by public hospitals, the libraries, the Ontario Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation, the Ontario Arts Council, the Royal Ontario Museum, the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Royal Botanical Gardens and so on, and other public institutions which may qualify, such as the National Ballet, the Canadian



Opera Company, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the Shaw Festival and the Stratford Festival. They all may qualify to a certain extent, but I'll explain why this legislation makes so little difference. It doesn't mean it isn't supportable. If it makes any difference at all, then we believe it's worthy of support. But the cut has been so great in all of these public institutions, the moneys that were flowing to them to carry out the responsibilities have been almost totally removed.

I happen to have the budget. This is Gerry Phillips's copy of the budget. It's got some notes in it; it's dog-eared; it's been well read. Mr Phillips, who is the member for Scarborough-Agincourt, the Liberal finance critic, indicated to me that I should look on page 68 of the budget so that I could see that there were a considerable number of cuts. I look at culture alone, because some of the institutions that are described in here can be looked at in terms of culture.

In 1992-93, the expenditure in citizenship, culture and recreation was \$94 million. Do you know what it's going to be next year? It's going to be \$6 million. These institutions have \$88 million less money to deal with.

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**Mr Rob Sampson (Mississauga West):** Wait a minute; you skipped a year.

**Mr Bradley:** I'll go down further years. The member for Mississauga West is right. The member for Mississauga West wishes me to go down the list. In the interim year, 1995-96 — well, the actual 1994-95 was \$42 million and the plan this year calls for \$6 million. So you can see from its expenditures this government obviously does not have a commitment to culture. Its conscience is bothering it, so it figured out: "What can we do to give some indication we're supportive? Why don't we pass the Crown Foundations Act?"

Then I look at education and the capital for education, because educational institutions are mentioned in here. Libraries, for instance, can be helpful to education. I see the capital budget in 1995-96 was to be \$576 million. That's down to \$222 million, a huge drop in the commitment to education.

Then health, where of course there are health bodies here which require capital funding, and that is being dropped down to \$167 million this year. Right in the budget you bring forward is the evidence that you are not funding these institutions appropriately, so you're going to bring in the Crown Foundations Act in the hope that that those in the private sector who wish to make donations will be doing so.

I can understand some of those cuts. I should tell the member for Mississauga, I can understand some of those cuts because of the tax cut, the 30% tax cut which will benefit Trevor Eyton far more than it will the average person in the city of St Catharines, or Conrad Black or any of the other rich people, Chris Stockwell and others who are people of means. As a result of this 30% tax cut, you are going to have to borrow some \$13 billion to make up for the loss of revenue and you have to pay interest on that. So over the period of time of your term of office, you will add to the provincial debt some \$22 billion.

**Mr Chris Stockwell (Etobicoke West):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I notice that you're reviewing the

orders of the day because you're probably as perplexed as I about what bill he is talking to. I think we should review that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** I thank you very much for your help. The member for St Catharines.

**Mr Bradley:** It is a budget bill. This Speaker is quite stringent in his application of the rules, so he knows, he is very familiar with a budget bill and the Crown Foundations Act is a budget bill.

As I was saying, why do we have this bill? Because the government has to get some money somewhere. One place it's going to get it is video lottery terminals, despite the fact that the member for York-Mackenzie, I know, will be opposing the bill, video lottery terminals, and the reason then we will have to have this bill is because the government is losing all the revenue with the tax cut which benefits the wealthiest and most powerful people in our society the most. So we bring forward this piece of legislation.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bradley:** I'm trying to hear the member who is out of his seat who is trying to get a point across to me. It was?

**Mr Peter L. Preston (Brant-Haldimand):** You got all those bad things in one sentence.

**The Acting Speaker:** There is a question-and-answer period afterwards. Take advantage of that. The member for St Catharines, I would remind you to debate Bill 71.

**Mr Bradley:** Thank you. I shouldn't have been distracted by others in the House. But I do want to say that as you look across this province at the cutbacks that are taking place, you can understand why the government is bringing forward this conscience legislation. Their consciences must be indeed bothering them.

**Mr Stockwell:** We have no conscience.

**Mr Bradley:** The member for Etobicoke West interjects. I won't say what he said because he's a good friend of mine and he was only fooling when he said it.

I want to say that you have cut in every community. Let me tell you who's complaining about that. Not only the people who are directly affected like the patients in hospitals and the people who work in hospitals, but talk to your architect friends, talk to the engineers, talk to various people who have done public sector work over the years and you will find out that these people are now recognizing the cost of the tax cut in terms of the cuts you're making to public expenditures in this province. I have two members going by who are I know very interested in this and are not going for a cigarette, because it's illegal to smoke in this building.

I've mentioned hospitals because we all know the difficulty with hospitals, far fewer beds, far fewer services are available, but what you've done very successfully, and I must give you political credit, though I don't say it with any degree of praise, is you've intimidated those that you've cut.

The member for Windsor-Riverside the other day was describing a situation this week in his own riding where the government of Ontario had cut the expenditure for a courthouse considerably, totally downsized it, there was virtually no provincial money in it, and he had the mayor



and council almost standing on their heads praising it. If a previous government had not given them exactly what they wanted, we would have heard from them for weeks and months and there would have been headlines in the local newspapers. Here we find a situation where you've intimidated them enough that they will be quiet.

The same with the hospitals. I was amused the other day because I picked up my own local newspaper, and they're cutting 220 jobs in a hospital — and the hospitals are going to be funded by this foundation — and the director of the hospital, the president of the hospital says, "We're going to be able to give you better service." I don't think too many people will buy that. I suspect the board of governors and the people who work in the hospital know full well that the service provided cannot be the same with 220 fewer employees, but they're totally intimidated. They're afraid you'll close the whole hospital down or cut even further if they complain about what this government does. So you're engaged in intimidation.

The district health councils are now engaged in an activity that they would never have been engaged in before. They would never have accepted the kinds of cuts which are contemplated by your policies, but you've intimidated them. The suggestion is, "If you don't be quiet about this, then you'll get even less money." Of course that is not good public policy and it's not fair and that's why we have this act.

**Mrs Helen Johns (Huron):** They have a budget for three years. How can they have less money?

**Mr Bradley:** The member interjects. The Speaker doesn't want me to respond, because he says there will be some time later on, but I will be happy to answer any question she might have on that occasion.

**Mrs Johns:** I can give you the information about it.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Huron, order, please.

**Mr Bradley:** No doubt the government of course provides for its members the propaganda. We in the opposition have to do our own research. The one good thing about being on the government benches is this: All you have to do on the government side is move your lips, because all the material will be provided for you. In the opposition you actually have to go digging, and I know the member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore is aware of this. He has sat on both sides of the House.

In fact, Mr Speaker — I know you would agree with me on this — I used to rely on his publication from the Urban Development Institute to bring me up to date on what the developers were thinking in the province about various policies. I read it. I didn't always agree with it, but I read that publication. So government members do get that information, but we have to rely on people such as the member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore in his previous incarnation for our information.

Let me tell you of how little consequence this bill is. This is not anything from the Liberal research. This is the compendium of the Crown Foundations Act. This information is provided by the government to us. What we're finding out is that the federal budget changes are the real changes that have taken place. It says right in your own document:

"The 1996 federal budget proposed a number of changes to the tax treatment of charitable giving, starting

in 1996, to improve the incentive for making 'major gifts.' The general limit for claiming donations increases under the federal budget from 20% to 50% of the net income for the year. This limit is increased to 100% for gifts of capital property that has appreciated in value and for gifts by deceased taxpayers."

What they are pointing out is that there are very few people who are going to be any better off; for 99/100ths of the people of this province it will make no change, but that one small segment it will, and that's why we're prepared to help out by supporting this. But I don't think this government should be bragging about this legislation, because it makes so little difference and because you've already made so many cuts.

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Again, in your own document kindly provided in the compendium to the Crown Foundations Act by the government, it says the following: "Impact on donors to crown foundations" — this is the nub of it here. This really tells of how much consequence this bill is. It says:

"These federal budget changes are expected to close the gap between the after-tax cost of gifts to charities and the crown or crown foundations for over 99.9% of donors. There will be no difference in tax savings between gifts to charities and gifts to crown foundations for taxpayers whose cash contributions do not exceed 50% of their net income and bequests to charities will produce the same tax savings as bequests to crown foundations."

But I go back to the most telling line in here that probably those who haven't read the bill would not be aware of, and I'll repeat it to you: "These federal budget changes are expected to close the gap between the after-tax cost of gifts to charities and the crown or crown foundations for over 99.9% of donors."

So this bill in effect affects 0.1%, not even 1%, 0.1%. It's nice, I guess. It's better than a kick in the shins, but it really is nothing mammoth. We won't see a long debate tonight. We won't be going to midnight. We won't be filibustering. We won't be condemning this in the press tomorrow. We won't be asking a question in the House on it. We won't be making any statements, because it's of such little consequence. Nice to have. We will support it. We will applaud at the end as it goes through. We'll urge that the government proclaim it quickly and we'll rejoice with those institutions that believe they are going to benefit from it.

I just want to point out that in the total outlook of the entire budgetary picture in Ontario and the private sector, this is of so little consequence that one wonders why the government would even have the audacity to come forward with it and be subjected to the ridicule that is found within the notes provided by the government. They're not being malicious. This isn't a brown envelope. This is stating facts. That's what we expect the public service to do and they've done that. It's a straight fact contained in this bill. It's not to embarrass anybody, and I thank the members of the public service who have provided the compendium to this act.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bradley:** The member for Grey-Owen Sound I know is interested in this bill, and I'm looking forward



tomorrow — Mr Speaker, you will be as well — to the Owen Sound Sun Times, because the member had a press conference in his riding today where he was commenting on the work of the Minister of Natural Resources. I will look forward with interest to that tomorrow. It's too bad the House will not be sitting for a question period. It may have been helpful. But I know he's interested in this bill and he would recognize of how little consequence it is in the total picture of things.

This was trumpeted with a lot of fanfare by the government when it was introduced in the Legislature and, as I say, some institutions are going to do well by it.

Bill 71 will not result in any new funding for new facilities or services. It would only partially offset the Tory funding cuts, the cuts of the Reform-Conservative Party that we have in this province. The cuts being implemented by the Reform-Conservative Party are forcing hospitals, libraries and cultural agencies to be more reliant on public donations. Bill 71 will be welcomed by these institutions, but it is the Reform-Tory spending cuts that are driving the need to increase this fund-raising.

If you wonder why I say "Reform-Tory" or "Reform-Conservative," it was because I read somewhere the other day in the newspaper that the Premier said they were to campaign for either neither of the parties, or they could choose whomever they wanted to campaign for in the federal election. It wasn't necessarily the Conservatives.

I suspect the member for Grey-Owen Sound has a membership in the Reform Party and squired around his riding Preston Manning at one time last year. But that doesn't have anything to do with the bill and I know the Speaker will want me to speak directly to the legislation.

The Reform-Tory government has decided that core government services, such as hospitals, colleges and universities and libraries must now be funded by donations rather than by taxpayers, and so they are reliant on the goodwill of people to make donations for public institutions which we in Canada, at least — I know in the United States it's different and I know in New Jersey, which you like very much, or Mississippi or wherever it is — Tennessee, whatever you happen to admire in the US — I know that Newt Gingrich and Bob Dole and Senator Heflin — no, perhaps not Senator Heflin; he's in the other party, although he is a southern Democrat so he may be a little more conservative, but I know Strom Thurmond, for instance, and our famous Strom Thurmond, by the way, will be 100 when he finishes his term, if he is re-elected this time, so there is hope for some who wish to hang on.

For example, hospitals will need to raise more funding in charitable donations to cover the \$1.3 billion in operating cuts and \$82 million in capital cuts being implemented by this Reform-Conservative government. The Reform-Tories' decision to increase tax credits for donations —

**Mr Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa-Rideau):** Southerners tell the truth. Tell us about Sheila Copps.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Ottawa-Rideau. Order, please.

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** The judge.

**Mr Bradley:** — through crown foundations only increases competition between these agencies for limited contribution sources. This is what is happening out there.

Why do you refer to him as "the judge"? I heard the member referred to as "the judge." I should ignore that, should I, Mr Speaker? Thank you.

Now, what's happening out there in the fund-raising sector is this: Now that the Tory government has cut so much out there, everybody is competing for the limited amount of corporate money that may be available and private sector money available. I noticed in St Catharines, I was just reading this today, "Dwindling donations greet Salvation Army." Let me tell you where it is happening. It says here: "In a day and age when a lot of people are out of work, and with government cutbacks, they turn to charities such as the Salvation Army. We have to be there to help them."

However, what they're finding out is that there is a lot of competition for this money. They had set a goal of \$257,500 for the May Red Shield campaign. I'm very supportive of that and I certainly encourage people to be involved in that. But they're finding out that it's much harder to raise money. One of the reasons is that there's so much competition.

It says, "The disappointing drive can be blamed, at least partially, on poor local economic conditions." And I recognize that with all the layoffs and closings we've had in our area, despite the fact that I heard from the Premier that if the Conservatives got elected, all kinds of new jobs would be created in the Niagara region and others who had their jobs here already would surely want to stay. We found exactly the opposite and I could list — I will later on in another speech —

**Mr Guzzo:** We will give you a tax cut.

**Mr Bradley:** I can say to the member for — where? Ottawa-Rideau, the businessman from Ottawa-Rideau —

**Mr Conway:** The judge.

**Mr Bradley:** The judge, as it is said, that there are people who will be getting the tax break, of course, but you know that the richest people in society will get the biggest tax break. So if I were the president of one of the major banks in Canada I would be applauding much more, for I've often said in the Albany Club the champagne glasses will be tinkling as that tax cut comes out.

But I don't know whether that would be so in the Optimist Club, where people there make far less money and are people of modest means, for the most part. But I'm sure in the York Club and the Albany Club and the St Catharines Club and the golf and country club, the Nipissing Golf Club, all of them will be quite happy with this particular tax break.

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Here's the interesting part of it when you talk about this fund-raising. It says here: "Business contributions have been disappointingly low. Bulmer" — that is, Major Bulmer of the Salvation Army — "noted, 'Direct mail contributions from the business community have been one of the steepest areas of decline this year.'" Is that because people don't like the Salvation Army or they don't support it? No, it's not. It's because everybody is now seeking that funding, because you have dried the well for everybody.



We have Bethlehem Place in St Catharines, which is a second-stage housing project, highly successful, great support from people of all political affiliations who were there when the ground was broken, when a building was opened and subsequent to that. All the funding was taken away for the counselling services. A little bit has been restored by the minister responsible for women's issues, but they have had to go out to the community to get even more money.

People want to be generous — businesses want to be generous, individuals want to be generous — except that everybody is asking for that money, all the organizations. The St Catharines Association for Community Living has to go out for more money now to meet its obligations and responsibilities. Go down the line — all of them have to. That's why it's harder to raise funds.

If the government thinks it's going to get a large influx of funding as a result of this particular bill, it will find out that's not the case. If it's because of the federal budget, which looked after 99.9% of these donations, then there may be some money coming in, but I emphasize to you how difficult it's going to be to raise those funds because of the competition for the limited dollars that are available. Unless a business is booming and the people responsible for the business are particularly benevolent, you're not necessarily going to get as much money as you think.

We are here to support the bill. We will be here to support it. I'm delighted for the member for St Andrew-St Patrick, who championed this bill with her own colleagues and is very committed. I want to personally be generous in my congratulations to her. However, I do not think it will have the impact you people believe and I think the reason for the bill is because of the drastic cutbacks which you have initiated across this province.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments? Further debate? The member for Renfrew North.

**Mr Conway:** I want to join my colleague the member for St Catharines in saying a few words about Bill 71, the genesis of which I have some understanding of. Like my colleague from St Catharines, I want to congratulate the member for St Andrew-St Patrick for bringing forward the bill. As my colleague has said, we in the Liberal Party will be supporting the bill for the reasons that have been articulated.

It is a good opportunity for us to reflect upon some of the collateral questions. I am not going to get into the issue of tax policy to the extent my colleague did except to say that it is a fair observation to make that when one contemplates a substantially reduced role for government and when one looks at the electoral manifesto of the current party in government when it talked about core funding and core programs, it's quite obvious that there is intended to be a retreat from a number of the commitments that have been entered into by provincial governments here in Ontario in much of the modern period. That's been before the electorate, it's been adjudicated and I'm not here to complain about that. But there is no doubt, as my colleague from St Catharines has indicated, that the expectation is that we will have a smaller government doing fewer things and that there will be an increased expectation that individuals and private organiz-

ations will pick up some of the support that had been previously provided by government.

Over the course of my time in the Legislature, I've had some experience with this particular issue. I remember in my time at the Ministry of Education, and in government generally, a growing pressure back in the 1980s for this very kind of legislation. There were some modest steps contemplated to address the concern we heard at that time.

One of the most interesting experiences I've had here in 21 years was an experience 15 years ago on the legislative committee rewriting the legislation governing the McMichael collection, about which I knew not very much prior to that experience, although like almost all members, I'm sure, and countless hundreds of thousands of Ontarians and Canadians, I've had the pleasure on several occasions of visiting that very beautiful collection at Kleinburg. I was struck then, as I have been since, by the differences of opinion, the bitterness, the recrimination that developed around that relationship.

I'm not here to lay blame. There was clearly some misunderstanding between those people who arranged that act of very considerable philanthropy and the Ontario government headed by John Robarts. The donation was made, the foundation, as it were, was established in about 1965, and so by the time the committee of which I was a member came to deal with this matter, I think 1981 or 1982, Reuben Baetz, known to my friend Judge Guzzo, was the minister. It was an unbelievably unhappy situation. I read now in the press, in the last couple of weeks, that a legal action is being contemplated or has been initiated. It's very unfortunate and it struck me that it is not a given that just because government receives a substantial bequest, its efficient and effective and non-controversial management is a sure thing.

A former member of this Legislature, George P. Fulford, maker of pink pills for pale people, upon his family's — the Fulford estate at Brockville has, as I recall, come into the control and ownership of the Ontario government through the Ontario Heritage Foundation. The stories I've heard in and around Brockville about our receipt of that spectacular architectural monument, residence, are something I'm sure my colleague from Brockville and Leeds-Grenville could better explain to some of his colleagues in government than I.

The Firestone collection in Ottawa, as my friend the honourable judge will know, has been the subject as well of some very interesting discussion over the years involving the city and certainly the province.

I raise these cases simply to indicate that we have, certainly in my time, been in receipt of some very considerable bequests in the public interest from some very philanthropic Canadians living in Ontario. Their management has presented something of a mixed blessing to Her Majesty's Ontario government. I would expect that as we go forward now with a more systematic approach to these matters, through the enactment of the crown foundations legislation, we will have learned by some of those experiences.

I should also comment — and I don't know the particulars of this. I have been following in recent times the very acrimonious — maybe that's not the right word,



but I have been following some of the public discussion and complaint of the family of the late Floyd Chalmers. It's hard to imagine a more philanthropic family in the Toronto area, contributed millions upon millions of private dollars to the arts, and now, somewhat reminiscent for me — and I'm no expert and I certainly don't travel in the circles of people like my friend the judge from Ottawa-Rideau and his colleague the member for St Andrew-St Patrick — but, boy, there seems to be very deep-seated dissatisfaction on behalf of some of the children and some of the family of the late Floyd Chalmers with the management of those dollars. I don't know the story, but it's unusual to see — at least it is for me in the Ontario I've known — the kind of public acrimony around fairly long-standing or reasonably well-established charitable foundations after a fashion.

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I don't know, as I say, what's going on. I worry that the Chalmers case particularly may be sending a signal to those who intended to be giving, by virtue of the enactment of Bill 71, that there's just something in the air at Queen's Park that perhaps should make you give pause. That may be an unfair assessment but, I'll tell you, if I were in the ministry of culture, or whatever we call it now, I would be concerned about the publicity, particularly that the Chalmers case has generated in recent weeks.

I'm sure I only know part of the story. One of the fascinating things about that legislative inquiry into what was going on at Kleinburg was that, of course, we really only got part of the story, and the more of the story you learned — Morley, were you around for that? — some day it deserves a chapter in a book.

The memory — if I can digress for just a moment — that I have of that was the cognoscenti in the arts community — I remember the Davis government. I think there was a request of the then government, headed by Mr Davis, for something like \$10 million or \$12 million to upgrade Kleinburg in some good way. The cabinet, in its judgement, decided that the request was a good one but, in fact, they were only going to offer about 50% of what was requested. The thing that I found absolutely stunning was that the cognoscenti who ran the place — and I don't here mean Bob and Signe McMichael — the arts crowd decided: "What would those country bumpkins down at Queen's Park know? We will spend the \$10 million and to hell with them." It was the most cavalier, "What would they know?"

Anyway, it was a fascinating little experience where I'm sure I was not —

**Mr Terence H. Young (Halton Centre):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I believe we were debating Bill 71. The speaker's on a tangent. I don't even know what he's talking about and I'm listening.

**The Acting Speaker:** I believe that perhaps he makes the same mistakes that all of you have done so far, and I keep an eye and an ear open to listen attentively to make sure the debate is on Bill 71. I'm sure the member for Renfrew North will abide by that rule.

**Mr Conway:** I appreciate that, and I certainly would not expect the member for Halton wherever to understand what it is I'm talking about by reference to precedent. He would be the last person, perhaps second only to the

member for Scarborough East, to understand the point I'm trying to make.

**Mr Young:** On a point of personal privilege, Mr Speaker: The comments are not necessary. Personal insults are not necessary.

**The Acting Speaker:** This is not a point of personal privilege. Take your seat.

**Mr Conway:** I simply make reference to a number of, I think, related cases where the philanthropic instincts of the people of Ontario have been well demonstrated and where we've had some difficulty. I raise these examples because certainly ministers in governments have had to wrestle with them. I felt a lot of sympathy for Reuben Baetz in 1981-82, caught, as he was, trying to administer a very substantial gift to the province. But, quite frankly, the arrangement that appeared to have been entered into by Mr Robarts and Mr McMichael in the mid-1960s failed to contemplate the kind of growth and complexity that was bound to happen because the gallery, as we know, became exceptionally popular and successful.

Like my colleagues —

**Mr Morley Kells (Etobicoke-Lakeshore):** It was Bruce McCaffrey.

**Mr Conway:** Was it Bruce? All right. Sorry. Thanks, Morley. I think there was a change of ministers in midstream.

**The Acting Speaker:** Please address the Chair.

**Mr Conway:** I think it comes as a surprise to a lot of members of the Legislature and to a lot of Ontarians to appreciate the extent to which there has been giving to art galleries and to universities and colleges and libraries etc.

So we do hope that there is going to be an increase in the giving. My friend from St Catharines indicated that the Niagara press suggests that in some cases the evidence today suggests that it may not be so. I'm confident, quite frankly, that there will be —

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth):** A little passion, Sean.

**Mr Conway:** Listen, this is one of those subjects, I say to the member for Perth — and he will represent Stratford. I don't know the history of the theatre —

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order.

**Mr Conway:** There are a lot of very good things, particularly in the cultural community, that would not have happened had there not been very considerable generosity on the part of individuals and corporations to make it possible. Again, I don't want to be pedantic, but there's a very interesting piece that I wanted to read into the record, just in part, that I think raises another rather interesting question from another time about this very subject.

A very famous American commentator, Walter Lippman, whom some of you will remember, wrote a fascinating piece upon the death of John D. Rockefeller. Rockefeller died — and I can't remember the year. The article that I will refer to in passing is from Lippman's very famous column, which in this case is a 1937 column. Rockefeller had died and he had left a fabulous fortune and in the course of amassing that fortune became not only the wealthiest person in America but certainly one of the most controversial people that America has ever produced. Fifty years after his death, I'm prepared



perhaps even to cite his memory in giving my friend the Minister of Energy a hard time, as I did the other day, in some passing reference to "big oil."

I want to read a couple of passages from this article, which I think makes a very interesting point. This comes from one of the most prominent American liberals of this century. Reading from Mr Lippman's column "Today and Tomorrow," May 25, 1937, entitled "Concerning Mr Rockefeller." Let me just read some of this:

"Though Mr John D. Rockefeller was...the most conspicuous of a group of fabulously rich men, his wealth was an historical accident. Only in America, and only in the period from the Civil War to the Great War, could such a fortune have been founded. Before he started his enterprises it was not possible to make so much money; before he died, it became the settled policy of this country that no man would be permitted to make so much money. He lived long enough to see the methods by which such a fortune can be accumulated outlawed by public opinion, forbidden by statute, and prevented by the tax laws."

Now it gets rather interesting: "The Rockefeller family have understood this very clearly. They have not pretended that their fortune represented the normal rewards of successful enterprise, and long ago they had ceased to regard it as their personal property. They have known that this fortune did not really belong to them, and that, accidentally, they were its temporary custodians.

"It has not been an easy task to make tolerable in a democracy the private administration of such a monstrous aggregation of wealth and power. Somehow the Rockefellers have succeeded, and in an age when sentiment has turned wholly against the private acquisition of so much wealth, they have no bitter enemies and very generally they are deeply respected.

"Perhaps one of the secrets of the Rockefellers' family reputation today is that in their philanthropy there has been none of the odour of conscience money. They have not sought to buy the goodwill of the mass of the American people by subsidizing obviously and easily popular schemes. On the contrary, they have devoted their endowments to supporting precisely those civilized needs which popular governments are most inclined to neglect."

He goes on in this vein, and it's a fascinating observation. Here is a very prominent liberal arguing a case for private philanthropy for those causes that popular government cannot be relied upon to support.

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**Mr Stockwell:** It's a good idea.

**Mr Conway:** My friend from Etobicoke says, "A good idea." It's certainly an interesting idea. When I see one of the largest churches in America threatening the Disney Corp because it doesn't like certain of its corporate policies, I realize that popular governments in the age in which we now find ourselves may find it extremely difficult to support the art gallery which might choose to sponsor an avant-garde display. I'm even old enough to remember the archer controversy.

If you look at what the Smithsonian Institute faced in the United States recently around its effort to present, 50 years after the fact, a more balanced view of Hiroshima, one of the most prestigious research and museum organ-

izations in the world faced the wrath of Congress, the American Legion and much of the American population.

I think Mr Lippman raises an interesting point and I rise tonight to support this bill not just because of the financial pressures that are out there, and I'm not here to sing the praises of the Rockefeller family, although it is interesting how many of us — I live in a community where we have one of the old Carnegie libraries. How many people in Ontario know that Andrew Carnegie endowed the library in their town?

**Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton):** We've got one.

**Mr Conway:** There are many. As my friend Mr Bradley was observing, it may be quickly the case that if you live in Gloucester or Haliburton or perhaps even Rosedale you will have a better chance of securing money from Bill Gates or Conrad Black for your community library than from some cash-strapped government that does not wish to stare down the wrath of some group, some organization, local or national, that might just not like the kind of cultural agenda you wish to endorse or be seen to be endorsing. If you've ever lived through one of the book-burning phases — I see the member for Huron is here. It reminds me of some controversies of perhaps before her time in that wonderful county, but I don't know how many of you have been through those: "My goodness, the library has what in it? Margaret Atwood? Margaret Laurence? Well, now, we'd better" —

**Mr Stockwell:** Margaret Birch.

**Mr Conway:** Listen, there was no controversy around Margaret Birch, surely.

There is a requirement that these educational and health and cultural organizations attract not just public money but private money. We are aware, I think, as the member for St Andrew-St Patrick indicated in her opening remarks, that there is a considerable opportunity there. I look at the bill and I see a number of provisions that I think to some reasonable degree protect the public interest.

I've got to tell you, I say to the parliamentary assistant, the member with the carriage of this bill, one concern I have — and the older I get and the more I see of public institutions, and I'll be very specific; I look at hospitals — I'm really struck by the ability of some very well intentioned subsets of individual communities to effectively take over a public institution and for all intents and purposes render it private, notwithstanding the Public Hospitals Act. This is not to say that these people do not do good work, but I've really been impressed by the number of our public institutions that have to a real extent become the private preserve of certain people in the community. I sometimes think, Harry, that when I leave this place I'm going to have to sit on a big block of ice for a number of years and bite my tongue so as not to show up again in a few places. They're all run by good people, but these are public facilities and the taxpayers of Rawdon and elsewhere have a right to some answers to some significant questions.

I go back to the experience I had with the people running the McMichael gallery 15 years ago, when Mr Davis and his cabinet granted only 50% or 60% of their request for upgrading money. They just took his passing



advice: "We know better. We are the cultural glitterati, and what would Conway and his — the poor people in Pembroke. I mean, we are their betters. We will do what needs to be done and we'll send the bill down there and they'll find a way."

**Mr Stockwell:** Yes. Right on.

**Mr Conway:** That was just my experience. Good people, well intentioned, but they were going to run the McMichael gallery and Bill Davis and Bruce McCaffrey could take the noon balloon to Rangoon.

I make the point that I hope that in establishing crown foundations, we don't create an environment where some very good, well-intentioned people say, "Well now, you know, I'm going to give a library 50,000 bucks or five million bucks."

**Mr Bradley:** However.

**Mr Conway:** "However, this is just private, you understand. We're not going to make any of this public, but that Stockwell, I don't want him on the board, and that Judge Guzzo, no, no, just too much of an inquisitive mind. I want Bradley and I want Hodgson and I want Kells and I want some acquiescence to a variety of things."

If you've ever had an experience, as I've had, executing a family estate, you've got some idea of the pleasures of managing or dealing with these impulses. I think the bill contains adequate provisions to protect against that, but in my experience we've got some public institutions that have been taken over by some very well intentioned individuals who really don't see that they have a mandate to explain what they're about and take into their confidence the broader community in any ongoing way. I hope that doesn't sound too uncharitable, because I have a couple of friends who fit into this category and I hope they don't necessarily read this Hansard.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Conway:** Well, you might be surprised.

The reason I cite the Lippman reference is that I think there is the notion, and from his point of view the Rockefeller Foundation was the stellar example, of the disinterested, philanthropic commitment with a particular view to supporting those cultural and educational activities that no state Legislature or American Congress was likely to support.

A good bill, a good idea, I wish it well, because the public interest of Ontario requires it and will certainly benefit from its success.

**The Acting Speaker:** Question or comments? Further debate?

**Mr Stockwell:** Thank you for the opportunity to enter into this discussion. It's my maiden speech in this place on a —

**Mr Sampson:** Time's up.

**Mr Stockwell:** All right. Does someone have a Kleenex? Thanks.

First off I think what we should do — the member for St Catharines and his crackerjack research division in the Liberal caucus both went down and reviewed some numbers that were needed for this debate. I'm not going to suggest the member for St Catharines was less than forthright in his dissertation, but I think we need some correction on the numbers he offered up as concrete

factual data with respect to citizen, culture and recreation expenditures.

I have in my hand from the home office in Parry Sound the latest issue —

**Mr Conway:** The Toronto Islands bill, the latest edition.

**Mr Stockwell:** No, actually, Parry Sound, the finance minister's copy of the budget. The member for St Catharines went all the way back to 1992-93 to get the original number for the expenditures of citizenship and culture, and it was \$94 million. He made quite a pitch to the people across this good province that we, the province of Ontario — the royal "we" — spent \$94 million on citizenship and culture and —

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**Mr Conway:** That Nick Leluk left a real legacy, culture czar that he was.

**Mr Stockwell:** He was in corrections; that's right.

**Mr Bradley:** He was in culture for a few weeks.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order.

**Mr Stockwell:** Well, you're close; it started with a C.

**Mr Conway:** He was in culture for a few weeks.

**Mr Stockwell:** For a couple of weeks, was he? That's what I say about my friend from St Catharines with respect to culture and Fruit Bottom Yogurt.

But I digress. The amount spent in 1992-93 during the socialist regime was \$94 million. He went all the way to 1996-97 and said, "Now they're only spending \$6 million." I'm not going to deny to the people of this good province that there has been a reduction in spending in arts and culture; there has been. The member for St Andrew-St Patrick is probably the best person in this Legislature to give you the background and details on the expenditure programs, where they went down and how come etc, but I have in my collection of memories of this place a few explanatory notes to the member for St Catharines.

First and foremost, in 1992-93, again during the socialist regime, there was money in that budget for —

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** The socialist regime.

**Mr Stockwell:** The member's back; the member for Lake Nipigon is back.

**Mr Sampson:** Curvature of the earth.

**Mr Stockwell:** The curvature of the earth, yes.

Anyway, vis-à-vis 1992-93 to 1996-97 we had the failed ballet opera house included in that \$94 million, and that was a whack of dough. That was a huge amount of money they were going to contribute, but they didn't build, they didn't contribute. The following year under the socialists they went from \$94 million to \$28 million.

**Mr Bradley:** No.

**Mr Stockwell:** Oh, yes. That was a big chunk of cash that was taken out of the cultural community, and the dilettantes from across the province of Ontario had to do without. It was the NDP who took a good chunk of that dough. I don't want to take any credit away from this crowd. When they did remove that money, there were some oohs and ahs about the province, mostly from the Liberal benches, as I recall, very few oohs, and there were no ahs from the Conservative benches. I know, because I sat in my place. In 1993-94, \$28 million was expended; it's gone down to \$6 million.



That seems to me to be a far cry from the member for St Catharines' original position that we've taken expenditures in culture from \$94 million to \$6 million, when in fact it went from \$94 million under the NDP to \$28 million and we've taken it down to \$6 million.

**Mr Pouliot:** What have you got against philanthropy?

**Mr Stockwell:** Nothing.

I want to make a couple of comments on that. I don't want to go too far back and I know the member for Renfrew did speak or read at length about 1937, I believe, when the book was written about the Rockefellers.

What I want to talk about is from 1937 to today. There was in 1937 probably a different attitude to government and to expenditures of government dollars. There was a very different attitude in the society at large. I know just from my short term, when I was elected for some 15 years locally and then here at Queen's Park, there's been a change in what people expect from government.

Let's be very clear about what people expect from government. During those years in the 1980s, and I'm certain before that, people came to government for answers they never had come to government for before. As government became all things to all people, it had to expend money to provide for programs and services and expenditures it had never had in the past.

Many people saw this as a good thing, and I don't think that too many argue today about a lot of the programs and projects that were very worthy over those periods of time that government got into, but the one difficulty government faced, and society did also, is that the line became blurred between what government should be doing and what the private sector should be doing. Culture is a good example.

As a member of Metropolitan Toronto council, it was not too many years ago when there wasn't a nickel spent on culture in Metropolitan Toronto — not a nickel.

**Mr Guzzo:** It shows.

**Mr Stockwell:** The member from Ottawa says it shows. Obviously they took money from culture in Ottawa.

In a very short period of time the cultural community started going to government for assistance. They sold the assistance on the premise of providing dollars invested in the community from tourism, program initiatives, ticket sales and restaurant spinoffs, which are probably noble and reasonable things, but what became very important was the cost to government. The cost to government grew exponentially year over year, to the point that in my last years at Metropolitan Toronto council millions and millions of dollars were contributed to cultural activity. They were contributed to small theatres, the philharmonic, the ballet and opera. These kinds of dollars were spent in the 1980s and further but were never ever contributed in the past by governments.

The member for St Andrew-St Patrick does this province a service because we're beginning to realize as a society that government simply can't continue to fund programs that they are insisting be funded in each specific community.

**Mr Pouliot:** Blame the opposition for not being in cabinet.

**Mr Stockwell:** I blame not the opposition. I would not blame the member for Lake Nipigon for anything his government did, because I know your involvement.

The problem in the 1990s is that people in my community are coming to me and talking about education and health care and social services. The concerns they're bringing to the table don't seem to surround those other services that government has invested huge numbers of dollars in in the past years. Culture comes to mind. Health care is the most important to them, education's important, but culture isn't one of the issues. They don't come into my office and say, "You know what we need? We need a couple of more playhouses in Etobicoke," or, "We need to fund this program in Etobicoke that allows the philharmonic to succeed."

As times get more difficult, government has more difficulty raising revenue to spend on programs such as this in the culture vein. What happens over time is that the people who used to sponsor these very important programs, and I don't say they're not —

**Mr Bradley:** Libraries.

**Mr Stockwell:** True enough, libraries. I'm not suggesting those would be the ones they've taken, but these people who used to support these programs are simply squeezed out because government then becomes the person, the being that supplies all programs to all people. It's not that they're not philanthropic. It's not that they're not looking to provide a service for their community or to provide money or to volunteer. What happens is that when government starts funding these programs, they're not necessary any more and you stifle people's initiative to become involved in community works, in good projects, in cultural diversity.

**Mr Pouliot:** You're talking thousands and we're talking millions.

**Mr Stockwell:** You know what? I say to the member for Lake Nipigon, who says we're talking millions —

**Mr Pouliot:** You go and raise a million bucks. Ask Isabel to raise a million bucks.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Lake Nipigon, order, please.

**Mr Stockwell:** — I know at first hand the power of communities to raise money for worthy projects. They can do it and they have done it in the past. They were willing to do it in the future, but each time the government crowds out the private sector or the opportunity for people to contribute, they no longer feel the need to contribute. They blunt that spirit.

**Mr Bradley:** The Tories are taking up all the time.

**Mr Stockwell:** I accept a lot of criticism from the member for St Catharines about taking up time, but I hardly suggest you're the one who should be loud in that heckle at somebody.

I wanted to get on the record. You know what? I've thought about this for a number of years. I've thought that government — municipally, provincially and federally — has infiltrated the programs and initiatives to such an extent that it has squeezed out the people who want to contribute to their communities via investment of time or money. It's squeezed out people who want to contribute maybe through ego — I'm not sure — to get their name on the program. Who cares? They invested the money to these community groups.



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Over time we've done a disservice because we've tried to be all things to all people. I recall vividly: You just came into Metro council and if you said we looked nice, you got a million bucks, and I think that's a disservice. So I'm willing to support this. I'm glad the Liberals are supporting it. I know the NDP will support anything as noble as a piece of legislation such as this. I think maybe this is the one time we can all agree, through cutbacks, the best thing that we can provide the citizens of this province is through an ability of the citizens of this province to give back what we have given them, which is a good place to live, communities to live in, safe seats — sorry — safe neighbourhoods and communities that have cultural diversity, all kinds of opportunities for people to achieve.

So I say this is a good motion and I'm going to be prepared to support it and I think all people should be supporting it. When you go back to your communities, rather than saying, "The government has cut money and culture," which I know you're going to say first and foremost, but rather than dwelling on the fact that the government has cut money, maybe if we dwelled on how we go about raising the money within the community, not only would you never notice, but I bet you in no time flat, people wouldn't be spending as much time going to government looking for handouts; they'd be spending more time providing the services they want because they'd see in their own community they're prepared to support these endeavours.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments? The member for St Catharines.

**Mr Bradley:** I was delighted that the member rose to speak in the House. Even though on some occasions he did not always stay on the contents of the bill, I did not get up to challenge that because I appreciate his suggestions to us this evening.

I notice that he didn't mention that for 99.9% of the donors this bill will make absolutely no difference. The changes in the federal budget have already made the difference and this is minuscule, but still supportable. As I said when he was in another room, it is better than a kick in the kneecap.

Second, I was pleased to hear him speak because it certainly sounded as though this was a cabinet-level-entry speech. I have noted his behaviour in the last while. He's always an outspoken individual, quick with a quip and bright with the news media. I watch him on television on various programs where he is asked to be on, or whether he's calling the station to ask whether he can be on, I'm not certain of that, but he uses the same entertaining style on that occasion. I think he's working his way back into the cabinet, however, because as I watched originally when he started out in this House he was often critical of the government of which he was a member, and justifiably so. He got up with a question one day in the House where he —

**Mr Stockwell:** What has this got to do with my speech?

**Mr Bradley:** It's your speech I'm thinking of. He got up in the House one day and asked an excellent question of the Minister of Education as to why they were taking money out of Etobicoke for property taxes and sending it

to other places in the province, and I admired him for having the intestinal fortitude to do so.

I listened to tonight's speech. I think he genuinely believes what he said tonight. Don't get me wrong. I think he genuinely believes what he said, but I'm sure that the people in the Premier's office who advise the first minister of this province will be pleased to hear him toeing the line, adhering to the policy and the pronouncements of the ideological right who control the Premier's office. I admire him for that. I wish him well in getting into the cabinet.

**Mr Pouliot:** I too of course in the spirit of goodwill echo the sentiment from my distinguished and long-time-serving colleague in wishing all our sincere best wishes. May you enter that inner sanctum which is cabinet. The member for Etobicoke West is very captivating, has a style all his own. He never left the opposition, and when you fail to make the transition just in time, you're left as not being part of the transition.

He tells us that people had an opportunity to pick up the slack. The federal government has fewer dollars to give to all the good deeds out there. The provincial government follows suit, naturally so. During good times, the fine hearts, the beauty of the soul. Food for the soul is the last endeavour to benefit during good times. We don't seem to recognize it as quickly as other endeavours. During bad times they're the first ones to suffer, so they become of no consequence.

We feel that philanthropy will pick up the slack through the opportunity of a tax incentive, and, yes, you have mentioned recognition. And people do a lot. But when all is said and done, there is not enough money to replace what has been taken off the arts marketplace, and you consequently at times have a tug of war between — I shouldn't say a culture of or a culture for the rich; I will say a recognized culture and that of the street. With that polarization, all people suffer, all people compete for a few dollars. You have the opportunity; people will not and shall not be lured or seduced by the fact that you will make up the slack with philanthropy.

**Mr Toni Skarica (Wentworth North):** I'm a little reluctant to stand up and speak, because I'm not in any way as eloquent as the last four speakers. But I think one important point has to be addressed. The member for St Catharines indicated this bill is minuscule, it only applies to 0.1%; 99.9% it doesn't apply to.

Just using those numbers, if there are 11 million people in Ontario and 0.1% of them are induced to make a donation, that's 11,000 donations that might not have otherwise been made. I suggest that's not minuscule.

Another thing that I'd like to point out that nobody has is that the member for St Andrew-St Patrick put her heart and soul into this bill so that good could be done. There's nothing bad that could be said about this bill, yet we are hearing criticism from the Liberal benches. I want to applaud and compliment the member for St Andrew-St Patrick.

I'd also like to point out that in politics a lot of vicious things go on, even within your own party. But the member for St Andrew-St Patrick, no one has ever said anything negative about her, and she is probably the most popular person in the House. It's very typical of her to be behind this type of legislation. It does not harm anyone.



It does not tax anyone. It doesn't force anyone to do anything. It allows people, if they wish, to make voluntary donations. As I've indicated, it allows for 11,000 donations per year to be made that might not otherwise have been made, and I suggest that's not minuscule in any way at all.

**Mr Conway:** I want to thank the member from Etobicoke; as always, a lively and spirited speech. I don't disagree with him that there are excesses about which complaint is properly registered. Where I do take some issue is his notion of what governments did or didn't do in the pre-intrusive age. My grandfather was here back in the 1920s and 1930s, and I remember not too long ago looking at some public accounts from the 1930s. God, if you wanted a good right-winger on a Monday, Tuesday and a Thursday, Mitch Hepburn was about as good as you could get.

I just look at where we spent some of the money in the 1930s. That beautiful Niagara parks complex around the great cataract at Niagara was built by a Depression-racked government. The park that we enjoy today in which this Parliament Building is situated is in significant measure the contribution of Oliver Mowat to future generations of Ontarians living in and around Toronto.

We have a popular notion today — and I don't disagree with my colleague my friend from Etobicoke, who says that our constituents want money spent on health care; he's right. It is lost on a lot of people that provincial governments didn't really start to spend money, in terms of supporting hospitals and the like, until the late 1950s. We are very recent in that business.

In supporting his colleague the member for St Andrew-St Patrick, I want to say that in a free and democratic society where there are all kinds of pressures on popularly elected assemblies, on myself just as much as on my friend from Etobicoke — and I understand that there are some appropriations that the people of Renfrew would rather not have me support — I hope that none of us, in our discharge of our responsibilities, fail to understand that libraries and cultural institutions deserve some real measure of public support as well as philanthropic support.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Etobicoke West, two minutes.

**Mr Stockwell:** To work backwards first, the member for Renfrew North, the budget isn't being reduced to nothing. There is still money there. I don't think anyone would take up debate with that; it's a philosophical approach that all people on all sides of this Legislature would agree with. There needs to be some money. The question is, where and how much? That debate needs to happen because it's been more recent when we've seen the government take larger and broader steps into the particular operation of these kinds of needs. That debate is given, and I don't think it needs to become political. It's an accepted pragmatism today that we have to provide for some moneys. The question is, where is the level? I'm saying that's the kind of debate that needs to take place and that's why I think the member for St Andrew-St Patrick's bill is so important.

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Wentworth North — I need to say no more. His comments are well taken and particularly appropriate.

Lake Nipigon — much the same as the member from Renfrew, both my friends, and I would say you're both singing the same song. I don't disagree. I think what you say makes sense, but I think what we're trying to say over here as well as out there is the kinds of levels of expenditure, the kinds of levels we've committed to in the past, in my humble opinion, we can't maintain. I don't care which party is elected, which party would have been elected; I don't think you would have maintained the spending levels that were set by the previous administrations.

Of course, lastly, the member for St Catharines, just to end up on a high note, suggested I spoke out sometimes early against this government. Well yes, I did. I don't deny that sometimes I have an opinion and I need to share it. But I will say about the member for St Catharines, I would not accuse him of that. He speaks the party line. He toes the party line. He constantly gives it his all. In the school yard vernacular, we have a name for that.

**The Acting Speaker:** Any further debate? If not, the parliamentary assistant.

**Ms Bassett:** Am I to sum up?

**The Acting Speaker:** You can close the debate.

**Ms Bassett:** I just wanted to thank everybody for their comments. I think they're very thoughtful comments. The member for Renfrew North, I know you pointed out with your corporate memory, as they say — we are, I hope, going to avoid some of the pitfalls other administrations have got into. If you look at subsection 10(2) of the bill when you get home, you will see that the bill protects the public interest because they have to fulfil the objects of the institution. U of T, as a matter of fact, has turned down many gifts because it did not fit into the mandate. From that point of view you could rest assured we hope we're on the right track. As you did point out, the legislation is very well developed based on the past, and I hope we're getting more sophisticated all the time.

If I could say to my colleague from St Catharines and my colleague across in the same party about this bill, really the money comes from very few people, that's true, but when you look at the donations that came in that you seem to cross off as nothing, look at U of T — \$20 million, \$27 million; \$6 million to the University of Western Ontario. These might come from very few people — they're not in your 90%, or whatever you say — but they're very large donations and they aren't going to be the answer to cutbacks if that's what you're talking about. We never expect that. We're giving these institutions a tool to help raise some money for themselves to see themselves through a hard time.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for St Andrew-St Patrick has moved second reading of Bill 71.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading? Agreed.

#### TAX CUT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH ACT, 1996 LOI DE 1996 SUR LA RÉDUCTION D'IMPÔTS ET LA CROISSANCE ÉCONOMIQUE

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 47, An Act to cut taxes, to stimulate economic growth and to implement other measures



contained in the 1996 Budget / *Projet de loi 47, Loi visant à réduire les impôts, à stimuler la croissance économique et à mettre en oeuvre d'autres mesures mentionnées dans le budget de 1996.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** I believe the member for Hamilton Centre had the floor last time.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have I believe a few minutes left in my speech responding to the —

*Interjections.*

**Mr Christopherson:** Oh, there we go. Look at the clock. Generous, generous. I'll need a couple of sandwiches and a little bit of water, and away we go.

When I think about the bills and the resolutions that we've been debating the last few days here in the House as we enter the final few days of this session, I think they reinforce over and over again our key message coming out of this government's first budget, that the cuts that are contained in this budget not only spell disaster for a lot of the core values that this government supposedly believes in and were part of the foundation of their electoral platform, but we also believe they support our argument that in large part all of this is just meant to fund your tax cut. That's what this is all about. As much as I see the backbenchers again recoiling and rolling their eyes, the fact of the matter is, that is the truth of what's going on. The cuts are here to the degree that they are because you have to find that \$5 billion in order to pay for this tax cut.

I'm finding constituents in Hamilton Centre are more and more beginning to realize that there isn't a big windfall for them. In fact, if anything, there are a few bucks. Anybody will take a few bucks if they can get them, but when they start to look at the education increases — and in my riding of Hamilton Centre we have an average of a \$35-a-year property tax increase as it relates to the education portion of the budget. Now, this government, I know what you're going to say: "That's not our decision. We didn't do that. That's the local school board doing that." But the fact of the matter is, this school board only took that measure because this government left them no choice. They said, "You either raise taxes to cover off the money that we have withheld to pay for our tax cut or you cut and slash the education system in Hamilton to the point where you are doing serious damage to the classroom teaching that's going on."

That, by the way, was another cornerstone promise of this government, that they would do nothing that affected classroom teaching, and yet I defy this government to find a trustee in Hamilton who believes that if they had cut dollar for dollar what this government dictated they had to it wouldn't have a serious negative impact on classroom teaching. Our board, like any other, represents the full philosophical spectrum and all the parties are there and there are the non-aligned people. The fact of the matter is that you can't take the kind of money that you have out of education — \$400 million equates to \$1 billion, as you well know, to school boards, given their fiscal year as it relates to the amount of time the schools are operating. That's \$1 billion a year out of the school system in this province. You don't want to talk about that.

The social service cuts that you've implemented have done so much damage to the agencies and organizations in all our communities. I can't believe Hamilton's that unique. It's those agencies that give life and give meaning to the idea of neighbourhoods, of community, and of compassion and caring. All those things get swept aside in your mad dash to keep the promise of a 30% tax cut which the very wealthy will be the only ones to truly benefit from.

Take the bill that we just passed, Bill 71, the Crown Foundations Act. I agree with my colleagues in the Liberal Party and my colleagues in my party who've made the point that you're only having to do this sort of thing to try and offset and mitigate the damage you've done to those cultural institutions in all our communities.

As much as you might believe or want it to be true, we are not yet fully embracing the American idea of what society is and what community is. They're entitled to make that decision, that's part of the freedom of democracy. But historically we in Canada, and particularly here in Ontario, have rejected that. Certainly previous Progressive Conservative governments rejected that, as have Liberal and NDP governments. We have not embraced the idea that the dollar and the bottom line is the only thing that matters. Your budget reflects that ideology, that hard-line, Newt Gingrich kind of ideal, an agenda that says the more we get government out of people's lives, the better society will be. Most of you seem to believe that, full stop, that the more of it that goes the better off we'll all be.

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Yet we know that the United Nations, for instance, has twice voted Canada as the greatest country in the world to live. That didn't happen because we were absolutely the most competitive in the entire world, or because our profit margins were the highest in the world, or because our tax rates were the absolutely lowest in the world, or because we had the lowest and least amount of environmental protections and the lowest labour laws. That's not why we were selected. We were selected because we were a society in Ontario — and in large part what happens in Ontario does set the agenda for the national spectrum that is all of politics.

Here in Ontario we have said that building communities, caring for those who are in the most unfortunate of circumstances, most times through circumstances beyond their control — that we want to share what we can generate, the beauty we've been given, the natural resources, the accessibility to the waterways and other transportation networks, being right next door to the largest economy in the world. We are truly blessed.

People who came to this very place and stood and sat in the place where we are right now, who came before us, said there needs to be a sharing that makes sure that people don't fall through the cracks, that there's no excuse for people to be in that kind of destitution in a province like this.

And you know what? The reality is that all through those decades of building a caring society we still had lots of rich people, we still had lots of people who did quite well, thank you very much. That seems to be the nature of a market-driven economy, and that clearly and



definitely is where the globe is going, if not already there. So some argument that somehow we have to return to an old value system but forget about the caring part puts the lie, in my opinion, to this government's assertion that going back 20, 30, 40, 50 years is the way to go.

You leave out that whole component of our history, that part of our history that built the health care system, that built the social service system, that built our transportation networks, our municipal infrastructures, our excellent police services, our excellent ambulance services. All those things, whether you admit it or not, are a part of what you want to throw out the window so you can give a 30% tax cut to your rich friends. That's the bottom line, as we see it, in terms of what your budget is all about.

I accept that you're floating along with a fair degree of popularity. That's there and it's difficult to refute. But I suggest to you, those of you who might want to gloat a little too soon, that you wait. First of all, not all your cuts have taken hold; in fact you haven't even announced them all. As we begin to see ministers like the Minister of Health flip-flop on issues where they said, "We're not going to fund this," you've now got a fiscal problem. You've got to go somewhere else to find that money, an area you'd already said no to. As we begin to see announcements that fill in the programs that are gone right now because all they have is a placeholder in the budget — X number of tens and hundreds of millions yet to be found — when all those things have their full impact and the average working person and the average middle-class person in this province starts to say, "There's what I got from the Common Sense Revolution and there's what it cost me" —

**Mr Terence H. Young (Halton Centre):** Jobs.

**Mr Christopherson:** One of the backbenchers hollered out "Jobs." You're part of the same government that thinks workfare is some idea of a job, because that's all you're offering. That's what so frustrating for those of us who believe that what made this province the great place it is are now being dismantled. That's what's happening. I honestly believe that in a few years that reality will take hold among the majority, and when it does, you will be singing a very, very different tune.

Unfortunately, by then so much damage will be done that it will take us years and decades to build back to the kind of place we can be proud of rather than the least environmental protection and labour laws that belong in the Third World, not in one of the most advanced societies in the entire history of this earth. That's what you're doing. That's what you're going to be called on. We look forward to the day when the majority of people appreciate and understand that, because that is the reality.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to respond to my opponent across the floor. I will have more to say in a few minutes about the budget bill, but it's interesting that he's talking about the damage that's been done. I tell you, the damage that's been done is over the last five years while they were in government.

It's great to hear him stand up and say he stands for high taxes. I couldn't believe he'd actually stand there

and say he does not want to see a reduction in taxes. There are 75,000 people in Northumberland county who would like to see some taxes cut. They're fed up with the taxation you've been providing them for the last five years. They've had it to the ears. They don't want any more.

During your term in government, as you increased the taxes, what happened to the total revenue coming in? It fell. It didn't increase, as you thought it would; it actually decreased. If you look at things like the economists do, with the Laffer curve, that's exactly where we are with taxation today.

You went into government thinking you could spend your way out of the debt in recessionary times. Imagine spending your way out of a debt in recessionary times. The only time some common sense occurred in your government was back in April 1993 when you rolled out the social contract and did make some cuts. Thank heavens your Premier went to some conferences in Europe in early 1993 and found out that the biggest threat to social programs were the deficit and the debt. It was cabinet members like you who wouldn't give him the opportunity to go ahead and do something about it. You strangled that poor man and really strangled the province and put us in debt. We're now at \$100 billion in debt, over half of that while you were in government — over half of it — more than has been created in this province since the beginning of time. Thanks to your government that you brought that through. Thanks a million.

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North):** I want to take the opportunity to congratulate my colleague from Hamilton Centre for the excellent speech he gave. For one moment, I had hoped the government would listen, but they're reading from the same old text, the same old rhetoric they have been given, which they call the Common Sense Revolution.

I had hoped they'd have more creative thinking and listen to the member for Hamilton Centre when he stated emphatically some of the things you are doing, the destruction and the abuse you're levelling on the people of Ontario, especially the poor. I heard him say that over and over. I hoped for one moment that you would listen a bit. The popularity you have, as he stated, may last a bit longer, but because you've closed your ears and opened your mouth much wider and feel you're celebrating constantly, you have not heard the honourable member.

While you are attacking the fact that he mentioned workfare, look very closely at what he said. You really believe that workfare is the solution to jobs in Ontario, and you feel that if someone is cleaning swings or what have you, that's a job, a meaningful job in this province, and that later on these people will somehow be productive in our society after you have cut their feet from under them.

As a matter of fact, your Premier announced today about the breakfast club. My golly, you took away 22% from the poorest and announce breakfast now, when you took away dinner and lunch and everything from those folks.

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**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** The former minister, the member for Hamilton Centre, has I think



really hit the nail on the head here in regard to what the government's agenda is all about in this whole budget.

The government finds itself in a position where it campaigned on a promise to balance the budget over a four- or five-year period, depending on whom you listened to during the campaign, and in order to do so it had to cut, as of the beginning of the government, approximately \$11 billion to offset the expenditure problem within the budget. They have to reduce by \$4 billion to \$5 billion in addition to that for the federal transfer cuts, so we know they've got to reduce at least \$15 billion.

Now this is the logic of this government: They're going to reduce \$15 billion and at the same time they're going to cut the revenue. What they're having to do is to cut the programs and cut the spending of government far more than they would ever have to, because on top of that they have to deal with the question of trying to fund the tax cut. It's really ludicrous. The member for Hamilton Centre makes the argument quite well.

He also raised in his debate a point that I thought was interesting, that in the golden years we like to hear about, the years of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s when the Tories were in power, we had social programs that were in some ways better than what we've got now. But there were still plenty of rich people out there. There were plenty of people out there with disposable income. Our economy worked well. Why did it work well? Because you had an approach in government that looked at the question of how to make sure that you develop what's called a "consumer society" so that you have consumers out there who are going out and buying the goods from the merchants, which then translates into the jobs and the production of those goods.

The problem in what the government is doing is that they're going to make sure they drive everything to the lowest common denominator so that people either work on workfare or they work for minimum wage, which will be the same thing, and you'll have no consumers, no taxation, no programs and the death of the economy.

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** I listened intently to my eloquent and distinguished colleague from Hamilton Centre tell pretty well, paint in a broadly summarized way briefly what's already happening at the marketplace. But wait, people haven't been hit big time. When you look at the marketplace and its evolution in the months ahead, the CPI will reach above 2%, for it is written, within a period of six months. All you have to do is scan the futures market and you can see as it moves down the line that it will impact. Traditionally after the presidential election with our neighbours, you have a capping. If not a recession, you certainly have a downturn in the economy. The fuel isn't there as much.

They've promise to eliminate the deficit — \$11 billion in one term of office. They've promised to cut taxes by 30% at the provincial level, the PIT. If I were to gamble a few dollars — I too look for opportunities and I'm reduced to scanning the NASDAQ index and find bargains when the price-earning ratio is a mere 40 times. Things are —

**Mr Toni Skarica (Wentworth North):** Like copper.

**Mr Pouliot:** My friend from Chase Manhattan talks about copper. He will educate the House later on until

midnight about Mr Five Per Cent or the cornering of the copper market. We're all paying for this. I want to wish them well, no enemies in this House, but my chances of becoming the emperor of China before I die are an awful lot better than their chances to reconcile the deficit. More importantly, in the meantime the marginalized, those who cannot defend themselves, the most vulnerable, will be attacked by the unspeakable.

**Mr Christopherson:** I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the members who rose in response to my remarks: the members for Scarborough North, Cochrane South and Lake Nipigon. I thank you for your support of the position I put forward this evening.

I want to focus a bit on my government backbench colleague from Northumberland, who talks as if he wants to rewrite the economic history of Ontario. I suggest that before he stands up and pontificates about the economy as he sees it and remembers it, he might want to go back and look a little more closely at what was really happening in 1990, 1991, 1992. I was in the ministry of the treasury at that time as the parliamentary assistant, and I can recall having economists come in, not just the government economists but economists from the private sector, particularly from the banking community, who all predicted that it was going to be a severe but a short recession and that we would begin to climb out as we got to the latter part of 1991, 1992, 1993. That didn't happen. In fact, there were fortunes lost because many people misread that. So I suggest that before he wants to rewrite history, he take a look.

I also say to him that he ought not believe that the people of Ontario are nearly as naïve as he wants them to be. Everybody would like a tax cut, of course. That's not the issue. The issue is, what's the cost of that tax cut and who benefits? Over 50% of that tax cut goes to the top 10% income earners in the province. That's the reality of where the money goes. Who's paying for it? The poor, people on WCB, children, our environment, labour standards. That's the price and that's where people will draw the line.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Further debate? The member for Northumberland.

**Mr Galt:** I appreciate the opportunity to address the House on the debate about Bill 47, the budget that our government brought down on May 7, 1996.

You can really stay. You don't have to leave, member for Hamilton Centre. Stay and enjoy the debate. It's not necessary to leave at this point in time.

I want to point out that during the five years of the socialist regime, one of the ways of creating jobs was to bring in Jobs Ontario. Jobs Ontario and the positions that came about from those grants lasted exactly as long as the grants lasted. When it came to the end of the grant, the job disappeared, and I can assure you that's certainly not the way to create jobs in a country such as this.

He also made a lot of reference to the number of poor in this country and how many wealthy there were back a couple of decades ago. I can tell you what happened to those people who had some money: They've been taxed to death and they've now become the poor people of Ontario. It directly relates to the level of taxation. Just ask any economist and they can add it up for you.



I'm rather excited about the budget that the Honourable Ernie Eves brought forward, so excited that I actually wrote a little limerick to mark the occasion, and it goes something like this:

A government once was elected  
To cut taxes and do as expected.  
The voters believed we would do it  
And when we got to it,  
Only the critics got sore and objected.

I can't for the life of me understand the position that both opposition parties are taking in this budget debate. I can only surmise that they are angry and that they are disappointed; first, angry because we have done something they wish they had done when they were in government, and secondly, disappointed because we are actually honouring our election promises.

It saddens me that the opposition is so frustrated, so bereft of constructive criticism of the policies of this government, but it is an indication of the desperate need that the opposition has to find fault with this government and the policies that we are putting into place, which brings me to the budget for the fiscal year 1996-97.

I have to wonder if in their heart of hearts members of the opposition don't find it just a trifle odd to find themselves opposing a tax cut for the hardworking people of Ontario, when really they would like to be doing that themselves. This is especially so since one party promised to cut taxes in its own election document, the Liberals' little red book. Although I'm generally not into fiction, I find it interesting to wade through this document from time to time, particularly when I'm having some difficulties getting to sleep in the evening.

2140

What's even more interesting is to look back at the reaction of the Leader of the Opposition to numerous tax increases imposed on the people of Ontario by the former government, and I'm referring to the NDP government.

Back on May 20, 1993, the leader, Lyn McLeod, said that the tax increases totalling some \$2 billion announced in the government's budget for fiscal 1993-94 were, and I quote — this is from Lyn McLeod about the NDP budget in 1993 — “a disaster for working people.” She said, “For people without jobs, the budget offers no hope and no prospects for the future.” I believe we now have a budget that meets her criteria. We have a budget that does offer hope and new prospects for the people of Ontario.

Mrs McLeod also complained on that day some three years ago, and I quote again: “We were looking for a budget that would stimulate the economy. This one strangles it.” Again I would suggest that the Leader of the Opposition and the economy can breathe a little easier today. It's really interesting to note that her remarks during this past year totally have turned around some of the comments she made in 1993 and some of the things she stood for in her little red book.

Personally, I haven't felt this good about the future of Ontario for a very long time. It's not just the tax cuts I'm referring to or the other measures announced by Ernie Eves's budget back in May. It is a general feeling of optimism and enthusiasm that I'm picking up from people of all walks of life. There's evidence mounting that after

six long years of economic underperformance, we're finally coming out of the woods. I could really feel that feeling back in early April right after we settled the OPSEU strike. I had a lot of people come to me and say, “Yes, that's a government that's ready to stand up, do what's right and do what's right for the people of the province of Ontario.”

I've noticed lately that the resale housing market has literally taken off. Particularly through May and June in my riding, I've seen all kinds of Sold signs on signs that used to say For Sale and have been standing in various front yards of home for years, maybe five years during the previous government's term, and now they're actually being sold and I believe it was triggered because of the budget that came forth on May 7.

Interest rates continue at a historical low. New jobs are being created at the rate of some 10,000 a month and in April some 35,000 new jobs were created. I've noticed in some of the local papers at home that a year or two ago you'd see maybe one or two jobs being advertised; now it's a dozen jobs or more. There is certainly a turnaround, and the welfare rates are on a steady decline.

At the end of April in the *Globe and Mail* they published a survey by Dun and Bradstreet. It found that Canadian companies are also becoming more optimistic. They're optimistic about hiring prospects, about sales expectations and about job growth. In the survey, expectations of price increases also declined, which means inflation will continue to remain low. Statistics Canada also reports that employment has risen sharply since December. The survey by Dun and Bradstreet suggests the trend will continue.

All this is very good news for Canada's \$800-billion economy and here in Ontario we have our own reasons to celebrate. Measures announced in the budget will stimulate and accelerate new economic growth by signalling that our province is once again ready to compete. Just think how politics have changed in Ontario in just under one year. The first instalment of the tax cut announced in the budget is a tax cut promised by Premier Mike Harris more than a year before the last election. That was back when we were a distant third in a three-way race. It is a tax cut over which the Premier had vowed to resign if he did not fulfil his campaign promise.

**Mr Peter L. Preston (Brant-Haldimand):** That's not a Sheila jobbie.

**Mr Galt:** That's right. We know what happens when people break their promises and have to go back and cost the taxpayers \$500,000 just because they wouldn't keep their promise. As we all know, politicians resigning over broken promises, especially federal politicians, is certainly not a pretty sight.

There's something else to be optimistic about, and that is that voters holding politicians to their promises is a new kind of politics in Ontario and in Canada. It's the politics of accountability and respect for the people who elect you. To be sure, the opposition has been upset by our penchant for keeping promises. They say that we're stubborn, that we're being driven by an ideology. If doing what you say you'll do is stubborn and ideological, then I guess maybe we're guilty as charged.

The fact is that Ontarians need — no, the fact is that Ontarians deserve — a tax cut. Over the last 10 years, the



tax burden on the average middle-class family has become an extremely crushing load. It's been tax grab after tax grab, and any working man or woman on the street can tell you that some 65 tax increases in under a decade have robbed the people of this province of their initiative and have forced otherwise law-abiding citizens into the underground economy.

A few minutes ago we were talking about how many poor there are in the province of Ontario and how many there were rich only a few decades ago.

**Mr Christopherson:** More now.

**Mr Galt:** That's right on, for the member for Hamilton Centre. I think he can understand why this transition has occurred. His government created more poor people than any other government in this country has ever created. Clearly something had to change.

Edmund Burke once said, "The state without the means for change is a state without the means for self-preservation." That is what tax cuts in the budget and, yes, spending cuts previously announced are all about. If we are to preserve and enhance the government services that Ontarians value most, services such as universal health care, quality education and needed social services, then we have no choice but to cut spending and to stimulate economic growth, and we have to do both at the same time. The opposition says, "You can't cut spending and cut taxes too." I say to you, particularly the member for Hamilton Centre, that the two go hand in hand and are absolutely necessary.

**Mr Christopherson:** That's not what the economists from the Royal Bank say, doc.

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Hamilton Centre, come to order.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Member for Etobicoke West, you too. Come to order.

**Mr Galt:** The fact is that in a sluggish economy simply cutting spending to bring the deficit under control would be an extremely slow and very painful process, but maybe you would enjoy that very much, seeing people suffer in that style. But by cutting taxes as well, the economy will be stimulated, people will spend more, save more and invest more of their earnings. The only thing we don't want them to do is go putting their tax savings in a mattress. As long as they use it in some fashion, it will help the economy.

We collect tax revenue from many of these transactions. This renewed economic activity will create new jobs, certainly faster than any government program ever could. And guess what? With more people working, we collect more income tax and pay less tax dollars in social assistance. I think most people in Ontario have understood this simple equation all along. It's unfortunate that the government of the previous five years didn't understand that equation. Certainly we will collect less tax revenue at first, but as employment rises, we'll be collecting more.

That is why the tax cut will not affect our debt and deficit reduction strategy. We are still on target for a balanced budget in the fiscal year 2000-01. Most important of all, this budget addresses a critical factor in our province's ability to recover. That factor is consumer

confidence. Consumer confidence is an elusive thing and it is the one missing ingredient in Ontario's economic recovery right now. In many other areas, we are doing exceptionally well. Exports are up considerably and they are driving significant growth in the Ontario job market.

**2150**

Good evening, the member for Hamilton Centre; have a nice night.

To make the recovery completely and to help us meet our deficit reduction target sooner, we need average taxpayers in Ontario to start feeling good about their financial future. That is why tax cuts are such a crucial component of this budget.

In my home riding of Northumberland, the four key areas of tax cuts will have a profound effect on the local economy. First, the income tax cut will stimulate retail spending. Second, a building materials tax rebate will encourage farmers to improve their properties, and already I've had several farmers approach me about how they get the provincial rebate back once they build their buildings. Third, the land transfer tax holiday for homes under \$200,000 will give a much-needed boost to the home builders in our area. Obviously, from all of the Sold signs that we're seeing, it's having an effect already. Last, the elimination of the employer health tax will help small businesses compete. It's amazing how many people in my area with a small business are asking, "When will this employer health tax be reduced and eliminated?" They're saying it isn't the volume of money that really hurts them so much; it's all of the red tape and cumbersome forms that they have to send in.

A move to lower taxes also signals to outside investors that Ontario is competitive and is a good place to set up shop. Tax increase after tax increase under the former two governments sent businesses scurrying to less punitive jurisdictions. All the charms of Ontario's workforce — raw materials, infrastructure and social programs — could not hold them here in the face of the heavy and unwarranted taxes that we've experienced during the last 10 years. Many companies have rejected Ontario as a plant location simply due to high taxes, high provincial debt load and the horrendous red tape and overabundance of regulations that they're exposed to when they try to move into our province. We've set out to reverse that trend.

Let's talk for a moment about why we're so concerned about the provincial debt. At some \$8 billion, interest on our provincial debt is equal to the entire budget of a number of Canadian provinces. That \$8 billion is money we don't have to spend on health care or education or social services. What's more alarming still is that if we had done nothing, if we had continued to rack up the \$10-billion and \$12-billion annual deficits of the previous government, that interest payment would have reached \$20 billion by the turn of the century. Some \$20 billion from \$56 billion in a provincial budget leaves precious little for social services that we've come to expect. What kind of cutbacks and service reductions would then have to occur to accommodate such a massive deficit? The tax cuts and other measures announced last week are more than just a skirmish in the war against debt. They are indeed a victory for the average Ontarian.



I believe the vast majority of people want the tax cut and will do their part to spend it on the goods and services that other Ontarians provide. We understand the opposition has to object. They have to say that people don't want the cut and that they won't spend it, that we're cutting social programs to achieve it, but that is the old politics, the politics of broken promises and of treating the public's money as if it were our own. We must never forget that this is the taxpayers' money that we are talking about and that taxpayers deserve to keep more of their money that they have worked so hard to earn.

Just imagine for a moment what the opposition would be saying if we hadn't come through on our election promise. They would be the first to complain that we broke the faith, that we had lied to the public who had elected us. You can't have your cake and eat it too. The tax cut is just one part of a five-part strategy that we committed to just two years ago. In the Common Sense Revolution we promised to cut taxes, reduce non-priority government spending, eliminate barriers to job growth, provide a government that costs less and does a better job and eliminate the deficit in our first term.

In the first year, we've repealed the job-killing legislation, Bill 40, we've scrapped the NDP's unfair job quotas, we've frozen the average Ontario Hydro rates for five years and we've abolished the gold-plated MPP pensions and tax-free allowances that other governments were afraid to take on; more promises kept. The bottom line is, we have a plan and we're sticking to it. It's called doing what we said we would do.

I'd like to leave you with one final thought this evening. For all of the members in opposition who say you don't want a tax cut, I have a suggestion for you. How about putting your tax cut into the opportunities fund announced in the budget to help pay off some of the debts that you helped to create? At the same time, I'd like to remind the opposition that no one party in this province has the market on compassion cornered, because above all, I believe this is a compassionate government and a compassionate budget. This budget is a key step in restoring some hope to the working and non-working people of this province and the investors who create new jobs. That's because the best way to help our young people and the disadvantaged in our society is to create the economic climate where more people have the dignity of work.

This budget also shows compassion for the hard-pressed middle class, the people who have shouldered more than their fair share of the tax burden for so many years. Most of all, this budget will help us preserve and enhance our health care, our services for children, for seniors, for disabled people and for those who truly are in need of help. Whatever your political stripe, these are goals that certainly are well worth achieving, and they are a major part of this government's commitment to the people of Ontario.

Madam Speaker, I believe that our children and our grandchildren will thank us for the changes that we are making through this budget, and I thank you for the opportunity to speak on the budget this evening.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** The member for Northumberland says that he and his government want people to keep money in their pockets; he wants the workers to save money and be able to put money in their pockets. However, if he moves to Sudbury he won't be keeping the money in his pocket for very long because, because of this government's cuts, this is what the average Sudburian is going to have to pay: in regional taxes, there's an increase of 3.5%; public school board taxes, there's an increase of 5.9%; separate school board taxes, there's an increase of 5.9%; there's an increase in 103 municipal user fees at the city level. The city of Sudbury had to implement 53 new user fees in order to cope with the cuts that this government inflicted on the north and on Sudbury in particular.

There are all kinds of new provincial user fees. There's a new fair share health care tax for those people who are making big bucks that they'd like to keep in their pockets. There are new provincial user fees which are way beyond the increase that would be normal at any other time. There are increases of up to 20% at Laurentian University and of up to 15% at Cambrian College.

So let me tell you, by the time he's taken the money out of this pocket and given it back to the government, he's had to dip into his other side pocket, he's had to dip into his back pocket, he's had to take out his wallet, he's had to give the money to the government and give some more money to the government, give some more money to the government. He doesn't have any more money. So what does he have to do? He has to borrow. He has to borrow more money. So his debt is increasing. That's amazing, because you know what? Now he's just like the province. His debt continues to grow, just like the province's.

2200

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I always enjoy listening to what the people in the Premier's office are telling the members to say, and this was certainly in line with what the government wants to hear. The member brought some of his own thoughts into it, and I appreciate that very much, as it related to his riding.

If he were concerned about the provincial debt, and I think he is, he'd be worried about the revenue loss that will result from the tax cut. You're going to have to borrow an additional \$13 billion for nothing else than the Revolution. My friend calls it the Comic Book Revolution, but it says Common Sense Revolution. The figures are right in here. It's clearly lost revenue; the projections are in here. I'll say one thing: You did put them in here and you're going to lose \$13 billion in revenue that you'll have to borrow. In addition, you're going to have to pay interest on that.

It's interesting. I watch the Reform Party because I watch all the conventions. The Reform Party was, I hate ever to be quoted to have said wise enough, so let me put it this way: The Reform Party chose to have their tax cut, they said, when the budget is balanced, and most small-conservative economists will tell you it's wise to delay it, if you're intent on proceeding with it, until such time as you have your budget balanced and perhaps move more slowly.

I noticed it's pretty minuscule this year, and I give you credit for that, because I think it's wise to do it that way,



so I would not criticize you. You said the opposition would criticize you. I certainly would not if you said you were going to postpone it or that it's not going to be as much as it is. But you're still going to do it. I understand you have to live up to that commitment.

What you're doing with this tax cut is simply transferring from a progressive tax, which takes into account a person's ability to pay, to the most regressive taxes: user fees and property taxes that do not take into account a person's ability to pay.

**Mr Bernard Grandmaître (Ottawa East):** The member for Northumberland said that people enjoy this government for the simple reason that they're doing what they were supposed to do or what the Common Sense Revolution said they would do. At the same time, when you look at the budget cuts in the health care system, you said not one red cent would be removed from the budget, yet you cut it back by \$1.3 billion. In education you said the same thing, that you would not cut back, and you're cutting back \$400 million. You're doing the same thing for colleges and universities. You're not doing what the Common Sense Revolution said it would do.

You simply delivered a message promising jobs to people on welfare, but you cut back welfare by 22%, and now you say that welfare numbers are down, but you don't know if these people are working. I remind you that you're not doing what you were supposed to do in the first place.

You also mentioned in your speech that real estate is up, that homes that were up for sale for three or four years are now being sold. I'll tell you why: Municipal taxes have gone up, education taxes have gone up and people simply can't afford their own homes. That's the reason real estate is up. You tell me where new homes are being built in this province and I'll tell you that's the real economy. Right now it's secondhand homes, if I can refer to them as secondhand homes. You're not doing what you said you would do in your Common Sense Revolution.

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** It's always a pleasure to listen at this late hour, as I'm sure the constituents of Windsor-Sandwich would be pleased to hear the comments — I hope they're watching — so that we can then stand up and refute them. The reality is that you have to present the whole picture when you're talking about the budget that was presented, what was in it, and mention things that were not in the budget.

What was not in the budget was how we were going to fix the school system, as this government campaigned. We've got a number of issues in education that the government simply is not addressing.

I've mentioned, if it's been 100 times it's certainly been a couple of times, the portables at Sacred Heart school in LaSalle. We want all government members to be aware that this is just one example of how the Conservative government is failing children in Ontario. You choose to implement a tax cut and you cut from schools. If there's one thing the people of Ontario would make clear, it's that it is a provincial role, that it's their duty to provide good, quality education for children in Ontario.

Sacred Heart school in LaSalle is now forced, through its school board, to spend \$200,000 to replace portables,

\$200,000 which they would have used had there not been a moratorium on capital spending in that county, nay, across the province. The issue becomes that you are forcing us as taxpayers to pay the money twice: once because they have to replace the portables, because they can't wait, and we've got kids in terrible conditions — if I get an opportunity later, I'm going to pass around all the pictures I took of these portables because you'd be very interested in the condition of them. I spent a lot of time out at Sacred Heart. I think it's important that you should all see this, that we are double-spending the precious tax money that we have to spend on education. Not only that, you're making them spend it twice. I don't want you to feel proud about that. Thanks so much for allowing me those comments.

**Mr Galt:** I'd like to respond to the other responses; I just don't have nearly enough time to get through them all. To the member for Windsor-Sandwich, we could build an awful lot of schools for the \$8 billion we're paying in interest. There are a lot of portables in my riding too, and it's just because of the interest payments on the debt; that is why we're in trouble.

To the member for Ottawa East talking about no cuts to health care, the envelope of \$17.4 billion was a commitment we made and we've increased that, by \$300 million, to \$17.7 billion. Let me assure you there has been no promise broken whatsoever. Our commitment was for \$17.4 billion and we're well over that now.

I'd like to point out, about user fees, that when you charge a user fee for a bag of garbage, that seems reasonably fair. If you have a family that's putting out a half-dozen bags of garbage, they pay a little more than the widow who puts out a bag every two or three weeks. Do you want the widow to be paying every bit as much as a family for the garbage they're putting out? A user fee happens to have just a little bit of fairness, and you also have a choice as to whether you use it.

Let me use an example. If you have a couple or a partnership and they happen to spend \$55,000 a year and they're taking in \$45,000 — you say we shouldn't be cutting so fast — how fast should a couple like that be cutting back from the \$55,000 they're spending to the \$45,000 they're earning? You would do it very quickly in your own home, and that's exactly the way we should be running this province. We should be getting back to spending the amount we happen to be taking in.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate? The member for St Catharines.

**Mr Bradley:** I would like to expand on the debate that has been here tonight because the member brings up some interesting items and I'd like to address those items. I appreciate that there are people who have other opinions and that's what's good about our democracy, that we can share those opinions with one another and perhaps come to a conclusion.

The tax cut is an interesting situation. I want to go back to the fact that a lot of economists now say that if you're intent on a tax cut, make sure you balance your budget first and then have your tax cut.

I'm not overly critical of the government. I realize the tax cut is very popular. If you walk down my street and ask people, "Do you want a tax cut?" they'll say yes. If



you explain what the consequences of that tax cut at this time are, you might well get a different reaction, and I've found — the member for Etobicoke West is surrendering.

What happens is, if you explain that you're going to lose a lot of services that Canadians believe are essential for our quality of life, they'll say: "We'd rather keep the services. We don't want you to raise taxes and if you can find some way of reducing certain taxes for us, we might be in favour of that. But we would caution you," they would say, "not to bring about a contractionary effect on the economy."

2210

Dr Joseph Kushner of Brock University — whom I quote on many occasions in this Legislature, largely because he's a small-c conservative; in his 20 years on St Catharines city council, he has been known for his small-c conservatism — moved a motion in St Catharines city council asking the province not to proceed with the tax cut at this time. He explained that if you cut income taxes by 30% and drastically cut government expenditures at the same time, the effect on the economy, rather than being expansionary, is contractionary. A lot of people out there probably thought it stimulates the economy. In fact, he informed city council that a cross-section of economists would tell you that this simply is not the case; it's a contractionary effect.

That's why I caution you to move more slowly and try to get that budget balanced before you proceed with the budgeted tax cut. That's why a few moments ago I commended the government for proceeding slowly in the first year on the tax cut. The Treasurer understood that. He's understood what we in the opposition are saying and he's bowed to that pressure and, frankly, he's bowed to the pressure of the need for revenue. That's something I encourage him to do. He's done so and therefore I cannot be overly critical of that.

The member from Etobicoke joins me now and will no doubt assist me in the arguments I will muster.

What this tax cut does, and I've said this on a couple of occasions perhaps, is help the richest people in our society the most. But what you do politically, which is rather interesting, is tell the person at the lower end of the income scale that somehow he or she is getting a tax cut as well. But what they forget is that the richest person — well, I use Trevor Eyton; I'm not trying to be unkind to Mr Eyton, but let's say the crowd at the Albany Club in Toronto. The crowd at the Albany Club is going to benefit far more than the average person.

If you charge the people of the province something for garbage, for instance, the people in Rosedale or Forest Hill in Toronto or in other wealthy parts of the province can afford that quite nicely. However, that cannot necessarily be afforded by people at the lower income scale.

That's why I say what you're doing with this tax cut, which is a 30% cut in income taxes — that's the most progressive tax. Why? Because it takes into account a person's ability to pay. However, you're transferring that to a regressive tax, that is, the property tax, which does not take into account a person's ability to pay, or user fees, which do not take into account a person's ability to pay.

The rich person who has three kids who want to play hockey does not have a problem with user fees. Those

children will be able to play hockey, but a person of very modest income, on the other hand, may have to withdraw the children from the hockey school or from skating or some other activity. That is most unfortunate.

**Mr Chris Stockwell (Etobicoke West):** What about the \$13 billion we had to borrow?

**Mr Bradley:** The member for Etobicoke West reminds me that the government will have to borrow \$13 billion, but I already indicated that. Do you know where I find that? I'm going to tell the members again. They say, "You must be making this up or you've got it from some propaganda sheet." Where I got it was from the Common Sense Revolution, the campaign booklet of the Conservative Party. You nicely outline it in here, and I commended you a few moments ago for doing so. It says right in here how much revenue you will lose, therefore how much money you will have to borrow.

When I talk to people, even people who don't care about cuts at all and say, "Cut everything as far as I'm concerned," and explain that you're going to borrow the money, they say: "I thought the deficit was the problem. If the deficit is the problem, why are we borrowing money to give people a tax break?" other than because it's politically popular and it is ideologically what you want to insist that you're doing.

What in effect is happening is that you are transferring that tax. I think those who have cautioned that you should do this when you are in the economic position to do so are being wise. What you're essentially doing is following the pattern of the Republican guard south of the border. Many of the people — I'm not saying the people in here, although there may be some — who advise the Premier worship the idol of the Republican army in the United States. They think that what happens in New Jersey or in Tennessee or in Michigan is what's for Ontario.

Let me tell you something interesting that's happening. In the United States, you now have walled subdivisions. You have areas where you drive into the subdivision and you meet a very strong-looking person at the gate with a gun who says you can or cannot come into the subdivision. We're not saying into the homes; you can't even come into the subdivision itself. One of those is being constructed in Toronto at this time. The member may know where that is.

**Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre):** In BC.

**Mr Bradley:** And in BC, he mentions as well. I think that's an unfortunate trend, when we see people being walled out of subdivisions in this country, but that is quite commonplace in the United States and we're going to see that happen on a continuing basis.

What we're seeing with the diminishing of funds you're providing to municipalities, for instance — my friends in Ottawa would know this — is that you're seeing policing based on how much money you have. The automobile dealers in Ottawa, my friend from Ottawa East has informed me, were unable to get the service they wanted from the police because the police had other priorities. I believe this was in the theft of vehicles from their properties. So they made a donation of \$15,000 to continue the investigation. When they did so, what it showed was that if you have money, you can have the



investigation continued, but if you don't have money, too bad.

In Metropolitan Toronto, despite the pronouncements of the Attorney General and of the Solicitor General, we have 1,000 fewer police than we had five years ago for policing purposes in this city — over 1,000. I saw an article in the newspaper the other day comparing five years ago to today and the number of police officers then and now. We have a challenge to meet in the field of crime — I think most people would agree with that — yet this government's policies have caused a huge drop in the number of police officers available in Metropolitan Toronto.

We have the Attorney General now saying that because of money, because of the tax break and the fact that they don't have the money to do it, they're now not going to prosecute what he considers to be, or somebody considers to be, less important crimes, unless they're absolutely certain that they're going to win the case in court. What kind of message does that send to senior citizens and other vulnerable people in our society when you say it's not important and you're not going to prosecute when a person breaks into a home? Many people are concerned about these minor thefts.

In New York City — I don't know whether this is working or not, but I've read several articles on New York City — Mayor Giuliani and his police have adopted a policy where they're going after the minor crimes, apparently with some effect. We'll see in another year or two. They have followed a policy of going after even the smallest of crimes for those purposes.

**Mr Stockwell:** He's a Republican.

**Mr Bradley:** Well, he may be a Republican but he didn't support Alfonse D'Amato. I think he supported the Democrats, even. He supported Governor Cuomo in the race for Governor. We understand he's a progressive individual and knows the problems.

I think the wiser members in the government understand this very well financially; that is, the government can't possibly, under the figures they put forward, balance the budget. They can't do it. So what's going to happen? I suspect they should listen to some of their people who are not in the cabinet on this, who I think could give some good advice, and recognize that you can't balance the budget. What's going to happen is you're going to have to cut even further, and of course that will have a dampening effect on the economy in the province.

Conrad Black — how does he get into this? It reminds me of a situation we have in this province that I don't think this tax bill is going to solve, and listen, it's not only in this province.

2220

I asked the Premier one day in this House whether he was prepared to sit down with his friends in big business. I give him credit; he has the contacts with the biggest and most powerful business people in this province and in the country. I thought with the weight he carries, the prominence he has in our community, that he would be able to sit down with these individuals and say, "It is no longer acceptable" — because he went to Davos, Switzerland — someone made reference to Bob Rae going to

Davos and coming back converted — where one of the main topics was, what are we going to do with the situation where companies are making more and more profit and casting the people out into the streets in the form of the unemployed?

In years gone by everybody understood — didn't like it, but they understood — if a company wasn't making money, if it was losing money, if it's in difficult financial circumstances, there were going to be layoffs. If they weren't selling goods, for instance, there would be layoffs. That was understood. As I say, it was hurtful of a community but one couldn't blame the company for doing so. What we're seeing today, however, is companies making unprecedented profits and still cutting the workforce, still throwing people out into the streets. The executives who get more and more money, the top people getting huge increases and bonuses get them by — and it's understandable in business — increasing profit, but they're getting it apparently by the layoffs. The more they downsize, the more they reorganize — use whatever term you want — the more money they make.

I ask the question, where are people in our society going to work? Where are the sons and daughters of the people in our society today who are coming through the education system going to work? Where are those who are turfed out into the streets going to work?

Certainly in St Catharines we have people from a variety of places who have already been laid off. I think Foster Wheeler has drastically reduced its production and there are a lot of people who predict it will be out of business in a few years. I don't know; I hope not — but tremendous layoffs at Foster Wheeler. Thona Corp which closed in St Catharines; Mott beverages, 175 people out of a job; Kelsey-Hayes in St Catharines, closed down; Court Industries in St Catharines moved part of its division to the United States; ITT Aimco — they make brake drums — 100 people laid off; General Motors in St Catharines which once employed about 8,800 people not that long ago now employs about 5,300 people, and the axle plant is in jeopardy and 800 jobs there; all the public sector jobs that have been lost in the Niagara Peninsula, in education, in municipalities, in various agencies, boards and commissions.

That has not produced a bright outlook for the people I represent and the part of the province I represent, but I don't see anybody — and these happened, with the exception of General Motors — under a Conservative government. Is it entirely the fault of Mike Harris or the Conservative government? I'm not silly enough to say that, but I had heard that when the government came into power, everybody would be enthusiastic, they would want to keep their jobs here. In fact, you changed the labour laws. You sloped them from what many in business thought were very pro-labour to a very pro-business category. Many people in business are quite happy with that. You cut some taxes. You so-called cut red tape. You gave all these indications and yet these people are still leaving the province.

I lament the fact that so many people are losing their jobs. The reason I mentioned Conrad Black and Hollinger is that the pattern is, when they go into a company, when they buy a newspaper, the first thing they do is turf



people out the door. With the Saskatoon Star Phoenix and the Regina Leader Post, they went in and made deep cuts in there — both successful papers, they were both making money. But Hollinger decided they weren't making enough money to suit them, so the employees were cut.

In St Catharines, the St Catharines Standard has been taken over by the Southam chain and the Southam chain will now be controlled, it appears, by Conrad Black and Hollinger, at least by Conrad Black. What are we seeing in St Catharines? We're seeing significant layoffs at the St Catharines Standard; people in the production end, many who aren't going to have an easy time finding another job; "Out the door, take a hike." Even in the composing room, in the distribution of the newspaper, in the clerical end of things, in all aspects we're seeing a major downsizing and Conrad Black hasn't even taken full control yet. You can imagine what will happen when Hollinger gets full control.

As I say, I understand. If you're losing a lot of money you can't carry that on for years, but surely — what is enough profit, I ask? What is enough profit? What happens is, you get popular on the stock market for about a year. You get a blip for about a year on the stock market by laying all these people off and by temporarily increasing the profits; they would say making yourself more efficient. But what happens is, about a year later you're back down in the regular place in the stock market and you've got far fewer employees. They're people who are not spending money in your community.

You can't tell me that the quality of a newspaper is going to increase when you decrease the number of people working in that newspaper, and the local content can't be nearly so great if you're going to have simply the chain funnelling news down. We have Canadian Press in jeopardy now, an institution in Canada that kind of keeps us all together, that informs the people of Iroquois Falls, St Catharines, Smooth Rock Falls, Blenheim, Cobden and many places in Ontario. It takes stories from all over Ontario and Canada and tells us about one another, and that's in jeopardy now, certainly of downsizing and eventually perhaps being removed. That's most unfortunate for informing Canadians about one another. That's not something we can applaud.

I believe there's a danger to editorial content and freedom of expression because the publisher of the newspaper is going to have some influence on that which is published. When one man controls over half of the newspapers in Canada, I don't think that's healthy for the newspaper business. As wise as the person might be — I happened to hear him speak at Brock University, an extremely articulate individual, Conrad Black, a very capable individual, very successful in many ways. However, I don't think it's healthy that he own all of the newspapers that he does own now and that he's after even more of those newspapers in this country.

Video lottery terminals are going to be necessary, you say now, because of the tax cut that's contained in this bill. You're going to lose money, you're going to lose revenue. So a government that wasn't really contemplating them — I happen to know the Minister of Finance very well and in years gone by he was totally opposed to

video lottery terminals. I suspect behind cabinet doors he still is. What do we see happening? I read the campaign literature, I saw the people who ran on family values and community values and I wonder where those people were in the caucus speaking out against the widespread introduction of video lottery terminals in our society, putting them in the bars and the restaurants in your neighbourhood so that the most desperate people, the most vulnerable people, those addicted to gambling can get at them easily and particularly introducing young people to them. They are in effect electronic slot machines. They will do our society no good. They will get the treasury of this province over \$1 billion, but you will pay a tremendous social price for introducing video lottery terminals.

I don't even like casinos, but I accept others do. Even people within my caucus, the Conservative caucus, the NDP who brought in casinos, think they're helpful for us, and I accept that. I accept that we have them now and we're going to have one in Niagara Falls. I would just as soon not have one, but we're going to have one in Niagara Falls. I don't want to fight old battles, but this is a very significant escalation in gambling opportunities. The most seductive, the most insidious form of gambling, referred to as the crack cocaine of gambling because it's an instant hit. A person gets an instant result from putting money in.

What's going to happen as a result of this? You're bound to see more crime. You're going to have people who know that there's more money within the establishment where it's contained, who want to go in and rob them. You're going to have people who are desperate to get more money who are going to be engaged in robbery. You're going to have family squabbles at home as the breadwinners in the family don't bring home what they're supposed to, but blow it all in these machines.

I think what's going to happen — and I've read petitions into the record on this issue many times — you people are going to be and everybody's going to be paying for many years to come a terrible social price. I ask the members who are the good church people of the Conservative caucus and those who have so strongly over the years supported the Conservative Party to look at these policies. This policy — and of course I think of beer on the golf course and the places open to 2 am now, and again, that's a policy the government has announced. But all of these things, and I hear silence on the government benches from the family values crowd, from those who have a lot to say about other issues, particularly in the federal field. Let's hear you in that caucus challenging the people who want this tainted money for the government of Ontario.

2230

One of the reasons you're doing it is because you're losing the revenue with this tax cut and you're desperate for funds so you can try to balance the budget. The tax cut means a cut in health care services. I heard it said that you're going to spend \$17 billion. I would like you to explain to the people going into the general hospital today how they're going to get better service with 230 fewer employees at that hospital. It can't happen; it's silly. But the hospital administration have to put a good



face on this, because they are afraid, as I mentioned earlier, that you're going to cut them further.

I think of home care, I think of user fees for seniors for their essential drugs.

I see the opportunity of perhaps passing — I hope not, because I'm going to suggest an area where you could invest some funds if you were to keep those funds, and that is in the environmental restoration of Martindale Pond in St Catharines. That is the location of the Henley rowing course where we had world championship rowing in years gone by, and national rowing championships. I think that you can assist in that environmental restoration by matching the funds provided by the federal government and the local municipality —

**Mr Stockwell:** Spend, spend, spend.

**Mr Bradley:** — and assist in meeting the obligations of hosting the 1999 world rowing championships.

My friend from Etobicoke West who interjects from the table says to me, "Spend, spend, spend." This is an investment, because it will pay dividends. People will be attracted from all over the world to St Catharines, to our province of Ontario. They will be spending their money in this province. I know my friend the member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore, who understands these matters so well, would be extremely supportive of that, an athlete in his day of some repute, of some renown in his day. I know he would agree with that.

I hope you have some money for road signs. The road sign policy of this province over a series of years has been nuts. They allow certain things on the highways and allow something else not to happen. I remember I tried to persuade people to put a sign for Brock University. Now we have a hat on the road with an arrow. For some people, I guess that tells them Brock University is in that direction. Why don't we just have a sign that says, "Brock University, next turn"?

**Mr Stockwell:** I've got a better one; the old one with the question mark.

**Mr Bradley:** Yes, the one with the question mark; that's right. I think there should be a review of this signage.

I remember when the Liberal Party was in power I had to take a photograph of a sign on the highway to prove to the Minister of Highways that there was such a sign. It was in Jim Snow's riding, so it was perhaps a bit unique. The sign said, "To get to Martindale Road, take Seventh Street south." I wanted it to say, "Take Seventh Street." "Oh, we don't allow those signs." So you know how slowly the traffic moves coming into Toronto; we're going past Oakville, which used to be represented by Jim Snow, and I found a sign that says, I think, "For Dorval Drive, take Kerr Street," or, "For Kerr Street, take Dorval Drive." I got out and took a photograph of it, because traffic had stopped, and proved to the then Minister of Transportation that indeed that was allowed.

I'd like to see them, for instance, have a sign that says, "The Henley rowing course." I'm not looking for those ugly signs that all of us see now in our municipalities that are the blight of municipalities, those gaudy signs with bright lime and bright pink and so on that are all over the municipality. They're not effective at all because there are so many and they're a blight on the community.

It looks like some commercial community in downtown Tennessee or something of that nature. I've not been to Tennessee, but I've heard of that.

You're going to raise tuition as a result. Because of the tax cut, you're going to raise tuition. Again, we're going to go back to the 1950s when mostly the sons and daughters of the rich and privileged could go to university and community college and the rest, it was just too bad, unless they were outstanding scholars and could obtain scholarships. I don't think that's right. I don't think we can ensure equality of outcomes. That's not possible. But what we can have is equality of opportunity. Give people an equal opportunity to succeed; if they don't, that's a problem for them, but give them that equal opportunity.

When you increase by 20% — after a 42% increase by the NDP, which was going to abolish tuition — if you add on top of that a 20% increase now, at a time when students are having a hard time getting jobs, then I think you're going to deny some people the opportunity to have post-secondary education.

I told the member for Grey-Owen Sound I would mention POWA, the program that assists older workers who have been laid off. That member has raised the issue, and I promised him tonight — because I know he has raised it, as others have — that I would raise that issue. I hope you find some funds for that program. It's really a good program of adjustment for older workers who don't have a chance. People in their mid-50s who've been laid off and don't have a lot of job prospects, they need assistance as well to try to get back in the workforce, perhaps getting retrained and helped out. The member for Grey-Owen Sound and I would like to see that happen.

I hope that your ministers will attack gas prices, the oil companies who are responsible for it. Instead of attacking taxes, as the Republicans do in the US, attack those who are increasing, and that is the gas companies who are making huge profits and raising the cost to all of us.

The Minister of Environment and Energy is here. I wish her well in trying to obtain more resources to carry out her responsibility. I think what this government has done to the Ministry of Environment and Energy and to this minister is not acceptable, because they have simply taken away the tools for a minister to be able to do the job as no doubt she would like to. In her previous incarnation, she had an environmental store in Guelph and certainly was very concerned about the environment and probably remains concerned about it. I am concerned when I see huge cuts in the budget, when I see staff being stolen from every direction from that ministry. I hope that others in the government will speak on behalf of the Minister of Environment and Energy to get those necessary resources.

The support and custody office: I think you're making a mistake when you close down the regional offices. I hope you make it so it's accessible for both sides in the fight. We're not going to take sides, but for anybody who wants to have access to it so that they have easy and instant access, so the office isn't several weeks behind and causing a dispute between two people who are having to resolve some problem over support and custody payments.



I'm supposed to mention Sacred Heart school in LaSalle and the portables and I hope that you look after those portables, because it's a genuine problem.

Last, I hope you understand that we must have a good quality of life in this country if we are to satisfy our citizens and if we are to be truly Canadian. I see a movement towards the Americanization of Canada. There are a lot of things I admire about the United States, but not the polarization between the very wealthy and the poorest people in their society. I hope that you will stand up as members for a truly Canadian society.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Dan Newman):** Questions or comments?

**Mrs Pupatello:** I am glad to have this opportunity to speak with you this evening, and especially following on the heels of the member for St Catharines. As many of you may know, in a previous life he was involved in the education system and so who better might know —

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville):** A great member.

**Mrs Pupatello:** A great member from St Catharines, yes — who might better know the kind of effects that this government, and indeed the last budget, will have in terms of wreaking havoc on the education system? In fact, we had an opportunity not long ago to look at some very special schools that exist in Ontario and that are funded by the Ontario government. Those are schools for children with significant physical disabilities. There are six of them and there is one in Jim Bradley's riding in the Niagara Peninsula.

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We had an opportunity to speak with them and look at what was happening as a result of what the government must implement because of the budget it's introduced. They're talking about changing these schools and the school boards they're affiliated with, but even though they're just talking about maybe changing the name of a school board they might be matched with, what it really means is the funding levels affiliated with these special schools.

These are children who are our most-at-risk children in Ontario. We've got to be worried about those children and we've got to be worried that we do secure the funding, that we may want to change the kind of funding affiliated with it but never reduce the levels of it. I applaud the member for St Catharines and also applaud the fact that those parents continue to call and talk to us about the real issues at the school level.

**Mr Skarica:** I want to comment on the member for St Catharines giving the government investment advice. I find it intriguing for a Liberal to give anyone investment advice. It seems to me that when a Liberal government invests money, it invests the taxpayers' money and continues to do so until it's all gone.

A perfect example is the Canada pension plan, which will be bankrupt in 10 years, we're hearing. That was a Liberal government scheme. They were going to invest your money for the future, and now the future is here and the money is all gone. Now we get the Liberal version of more for less under the Canada pension plan; it's more taxes for less benefits. That's the Liberal version of more for less.

The member for St Catharines as well, throughout all his speeches, has indicated he's prepared to answer questions, so I have a question for him. He always asks people to listen to him, and I notice he's not listening to me. In any event, we have been criticized by him and his party for each and every cut we've made, for each and every downsize, which is now in the area of 11,000 employees. The Liberal campaign document indicated they were going to downsize 12,000 people. How were you going to do it? Who were you going to downsize if each and every cut, each and every downsize, we've engaged in you've opposed?

**Mr Stockwell:** I'd like to comment briefly on the member for St Catharines and his brief intervention into this particular debate. I'd like to remind him, when he speaks about the worthy programs that environmentalists would probably like to see funded, that this gentleman from St Catharines was the environment minister. He held that lofty position.

He's the guy who introduced the tire tax. Remember the tire tax? That was a tax designed specifically to be applied to tires, and that money would be taken in and applied to environmental projects to help relieve the province of these massive tire dumps. The member for Windsor-Walkerville is leaving in a pique of rage. The tire tax was probably a very opportune time to clean up that particular pond problem you had in St Catharines. It probably would have been a good time to fund those environmental programs.

Furthermore, you had that commercial concentration tax. Remember that one? You probably could have used the funds then to do a lot of those worthy projects you spoke about.

I don't want to say that the member for St Catharines is not a progressive member. He is progressive, but he's more progressive on the tax side than he is on the savings side. He's also very progressive on the spending side. Let it be said on the record that he ran a government in a different period of time, the 1980s, when people were calling for more, more, more. Let it also be said when the people were calling for more, more, more, the Liberals were very willing to oblige. They kept going — more, more and more.

Before you go ahead condemning this government for trying to balance the books, there were a few little hitches in your plan back in the 1980s. They should cause some sleepless nights for a few of the Grits across the floor.

**Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent):** The member for St Catharines was talking about jobs during his few moments in this debate. I too have looked at the tax cut. The government has said, "This is going to create many of these 725,000 jobs we promised during our campaign." If that was true, one would wonder why they are implementing the tax cut so slowly, because in my riding many people are looking for jobs. Here we have a government that says a 30% tax cut is going to generate many of the jobs it predicted, 725,000, and now it's bringing it in so slowly and making the people of Ontario wait for the opportunity to get those jobs.

As well, the young people in my community are greatly concerned about tuition increases. Tuition is going



up at a rate as high as 20%. They're coming to me and saying, "We can't find a summer job" — a traditional thing for many of them — "that can offset part or perhaps all of the 20% increase." They are seeking help from this government in that regard. Of course, a tax cut is not going to give them the jobs; they're not in the economy yet. They want to be good citizens and produce in this economy, provide for a family in the future, and they're being stifled by tuition increases and the lack of summer jobs.

Admittedly, there may be jobs in some areas, but in my riding the students are finding it very difficult to find any kind of summer employment, and these young men and women will take jobs of any type.

**Mr Bradley:** First of all, for the member for Wentworth North, who always likes to take a shot at me, the first thing I can say to him is that he should go to his Attorney General and ask him why he's firing so many prosecutors in this province. You were a prosecutor in your previous incarnation, and he's turning around and firing all of your colleagues. I would have thought you had a full-time job just trying to look after your prosecutor friends in this province.

Second, I always enjoy the member for Etobicoke West; he's a person with a great sense of humour. He will recall, because he sat in this House for part of that time, but even before then, from 1985 to 1990, I must give the Conservative caucus credit. More members stood and demanded that the government spend more money on more projects than I'd ever seen before. Many of his colleagues who sit in the House today used to rise daily, and I would have to fend them off. I'd say: "Look, we can't move that quickly. We're trying to balance the budget." In 1989 we did balance the budget. The continuous assault by Conservative members, including Mike Harris, on the Liberal government benches demanding more money was something to behold.

**Mr Sean Conway (Renfrew North):** Harris's line was, "I want my share of the waste."

**Mr Bradley:** That's what he used to say himself; the member is right.

As well, I appreciate the work by Sandra Pupatello, the member for Windsor-Sandwich, who raised the issue of obstetricians. The government retreated; I saw the white flag go up with the Minister of Health. She mentioned the jobs for the young people; they capitulated and brought in a jobs program. Now I hope they do the same and capitulate to her legitimate request for the school in LaSalle, Sacred Heart.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired. The Chair recognizes the member for Cochrane South.

**Mr Bisson:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Nice to see you in the chair this evening.

This is one of the few times in the Legislature where members have an opportunity, because it is a budget bill, to speak on the entire agenda of the government. For people watching at home, normally when a specific bill comes up, a particular piece of legislation, you have to confine your comments to that. But as this is a budget bill, we have an opportunity to speak overall on the government's agenda. That's one of the reasons you're seeing such an interest in this debate tonight in regard to the number of members who are speaking.

Listen, this is what it's all about, this is where the rubber meets the road, this is what the government is trying to do. This particular bill, Bill 47, which is a budget bill, is all about the tax cut. It's all about fulfilling a promise on the part of the Conservative government — at the time the third party — which promised that if they got elected they would give people a 30% tax cut.

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Let me say something to my Conservative friends. There is nobody in Ontario, I would think, who would say no to a tax cut; hardly anyone who would say no to a tax cut on the face question.

**Mr Rob Sampson (Mississauga West):** Peter Kormos.

**Mr Bisson:** I won't repeat what I just heard there.

If you were to ask the average person on the street, "Do you want to get a tax cut?" I think 99.9% of the people in Ontario would say yes; no question about that. Where the problem lies is that if you're willing to take that tax cut at the cost of what this government's agenda is all about, it becomes a lot more dicey for the government.

That's basically the argument that the opposition New Democrats and the opposition Liberals are making: The government, in its zeal to balance its budget, to keep its pledge to do that, is having to cut even deeper and harder to be able to deal with giving people a tax cut.

People are really wondering out there. It's not everybody who's in agreement with what the government is doing on the tax cut. There are a lot of people who stand back there. There are practical people who say, "In a time when the government has a deficit, does it make sense to give a tax cut?" Most people I talk to, and I think most people out there, would say no. You give a tax cut at a time a government has a balanced budget. You give a tax cut at a time the government has maybe more money in the budget than just being balanced, actually has a surplus. Then it makes some sense. You can manage the cut against the expenditures in such a way that people don't get hurt.

What we're starting to find is that the government, in its zeal to be able to pass this tax cut of 30%, which will probably represent \$4 billion to \$6 billion depending on which numbers you utilize — that's the cost of that.

Let's put into perspective what \$4 billion to \$6 billion means. The government, to pay its tax cut annualized over a period of two or three years, is going to have to find anywhere from \$4 billion to \$6 billion — so for the purpose of this debate, let's say \$5 billion — to pay for that tax cut. That is more money than we pay for all the colleges and universities in Ontario. That is more money than we spend for a whole bunch of programs in the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. When you add up all of those budgets, it doesn't come up to the \$5 billion you're going to have to cut to be able to deal with the tax cut, and it is almost equal to the amount of money we pay for long-term care in this province.

People are really, truly concerned and they're saying, "Yes, we agree with a tax cut, but not at a time a government's got an \$8-billion deficit." To give a tax cut at a time when you have a deficit is irresponsible. The



opposition New Democrats and the opposition Liberals are saying: "No, this is not the time to do a tax cut. If you want to do a tax cut, we do that when we have a balanced budget. You don't do it when you have a deficit."

Do people in Ontario agree with the Conservative government that we need to find a way to make government more efficient, that we need to find a way to make government, over a period of time, balance its budget? We, the opposition New Democrats, say yes. We agree with that principle. That's not the issue.

We, as a government, from 1990 to 1995, had to come to terms with that. We went through a process in 1992 of a \$2-billion reduction in expenditure through the expenditure control plan, \$2 billion through the measures of the social contract and \$2 billion in the form of a tax increase to try to balance off the expenditure-revenue issue so that over a period of time we could develop a plan to balance the tax cut.

One of the problems we get into in this Legislature and in the province of Ontario and probably in most other jurisdictions is that politics is what it is: the art of being able to convince a group of voters that your view of the world is right and that your interpretation of the facts as you see them is right. The Conservative opposition, and to a certain degree the Liberal opposition, at the time of the Rae government, convinced the people of Ontario that the entire deficit was the result of irresponsible spending on the part of the New Democratic government.

On that point, I say no. The reality is that what happened at the time of the Rae government was there was a recession. We came to power in 1990. I remember the day well, September 6, 1990. Barely a month and a half later we went to our first caucus meeting with our Treasurer of the day, Floyd Laughren, who came before the caucus of the New Democratic Party and said: "Guys and gals, we have ourselves a problem. The Liberals have reported a surplus in their budget," but they had at that point, in October 1990, a \$2.7-billion deficit and if we did absolutely nothing as a government we would be at about a \$9-billion deficit by the end of the fiscal year.

The one mistake we did as a New Democratic government was that we decided we would not be political and would try to be reasonable as a government and try not to blame all of the problem on the Liberals, because really it wasn't. It was the economy. It wasn't that the Liberals had done everything wrong. The reality, free trade and the rest of it came to roost. The government of the day, the Peterson government, found itself in a position where it lost revenue at a time when the province could least afford it. People were falling into social assistance and the cost went up.

I believe — I don't want to be confrontational with my opposition colleagues in the Liberal Party — that's the reason Peterson called the election of 1990 as early as he did. He looked at the revenue and he said, "My Lord, look at that revenue drop, and if I don't call an election and I have to call two years from now, I will be facing \$9 billion to 10 billion in deficit and I can't win under those terms." So he called an early election.

The big mistake we did as New Democrats was not that we spent the province dry, as the Tories would try to

make you believe; the reality is there was \$9 billion of deficit that was structural in regard to what had happened to how government was set up in 1990 to provide for people through health care, education and others, and if we had done absolutely nothing as a government, we would have ended up at \$9 billion no matter what we did.

What we didn't do was to try to expose that point on a political partisanship to blame the Peterson government for what it had left us. We thought — I think to a certain extent we were right in doing this in regard to being true to our principles — and we said: "We will not blame the Liberals because they're not entirely to blame. Yes, they're hiding some of the facts from the public, but it is not their fault that the deficit has gone up."

We got caught, when we presented our first budget in the spring of 1991, with a \$9.7-billion deficit because we did increase spending by almost \$1 billion — just under, \$900 million — in providing the anti-recession program that was heavy in the investment of capital infrastructure and the wage protection plan that kicked in in the second year of our government. That was the new expenditure of the Bob Rae government.

When we presented our budget in the spring of 1991, the reality is there was a structural deficit that was in place that got blamed on the NDP government and we never really were able to rebound from that because of the way we positioned it. I guess, to a certain extent, we were somewhat naïve as a government. We tried to be fair, we tried to be compromising, and in the end we paid the political price. I think if we're re-elected, we'll never do that one again.

It brings me to the point of where we are. You didn't hear the New Democratic government in 1991 talking about tax cuts, because if you look at the expenditures and you look at the revenue, there was almost a \$10-billion difference. We said, "Listen, we believe" — as my colleague from Hamilton Centre said in the debate earlier — "that according to all the projections of the finance people, not only within the Ministry of Finance but within all of the financial institutions across Ontario that give advice to the government of Ontario" — not public service people but people from the private sector — "we are going to be into a recession for 1990, 1991, 1992, and then we would come out."

We said, "We'll hold the course, we will not do massive cutting and we will try to protect people." That's what Floyd Laughren, the Treasurer, in 1991 announced in his budget, that he would not fight the recession on the backs of working people. That was seen to be as a negative by the media, and I'll get to that later.

The point is that we decided as a government in 1991 that we would stay the course, that we would increase expenditures by \$1 billion to bring us up to \$10 billion — \$10.1 billion in the end, or whatever the actual number was — and then we would end up able to benefit from a rebound in the economy, according to the predictions we had within the Ministry of Finance and also the predictions of the private sector, and be able to deal with it.

Then 1992 came and it didn't happen. Why? There was a major restructuring going on in the economy of Ontario. Ontario, the heartland, the engine of the econ-



omy, was undergoing tremendous changes that had never been seen since the 1930s. We were seeing massive job losses in the industrial sector across this province. We were seeing layoffs in mining, in steel, in automotive, in all kinds of industries that resulted in less people working, less people paying taxes, and people needing government services even more.

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It wasn't until 1992-93 that we, as a government, said: "Hey, listen, we don't believe the predictions any more. This is not going to get any better and we need to start dealing with it." I believe as a government from 1992 on, we dealt progressively with trying to deal with the issue. If we had done nothing in 1992, the deficit, when this government came to power, would have been somewhere around \$17 billion to \$18 billion. That's where it would have been. Our measures in the end were able to save, over a period of two or three years, somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$8 billion.

We did that with great political capital being lost. There were all kinds of groups that protested the Rae government's actions. They protested on the restructuring of the expenditure control plan and they protested on the question of the social contract. I remember in the city of Timmins on Algonquin Street having over a thousand workers protesting in front of my office over the social contract. I'm saying this for a reason. The media, with great venom, was out there portraying the social democratic party of Ontario, the NDP, as the great villain of capitalism and the spendthrifts of the province of Ontario.

I've been wanting to give this speech for about a year and this is the time I'm going to give it. In fairness, that is not what happened. What really offends me by this government is it has a revisionist history of what happened in the province of Ontario. They believe, as Mike Harris would say, there were 10 lost years. The Liberals blew the bank and the NDP did the same and it was all terrible and it's because of them that everything's so awful today.

Wake up. Come into 1996 and realize that what happened over the last 10, 15 years is a total restructuring of our economy. Look in your communities. How many people have lost their jobs over the last 10 or 15 years because of restructuring in the private sector, because of global competition, because of free trade, because of NAFTA, because of the GATT, because of all kinds of measures on the part of right-wing governments, quite frankly, that have precipitated this, in order to favour whom? Big companies and multinationals. In the end, we in this province have paid the price because we are the engine that drives the economy of Canada. All of the industries, from mining to automotive, have had to pay the price.

I come from the industry of mining, where I first was hired in the local mines in Timmins for the Pamour Group, McIntyre division. We operated a 3,000-ton-a-day mill in Schumacher, and to operate that mill and to operate that mine, we probably had a workforce of about 800 people working at today's wages of about \$18 to \$21 an hour. Back then it was less, but that's what it would have been today.

What does it do now? Now it's closed, which is a whole other story. There's still ore under there. It became

a question of, was it enough profit for the company? The point is that we've gone from needing 800 people to do that work of 3,000 tons a day of extraction, down to about 200, so all those people are without work. And you guys have the gall as Conservatives to stand here and to say the problem is that governments have spent you dry? Wake up. Come on. You know in your communities there are all kinds of people who are unemployed and they became unemployed because of globalization, because of all of the things the corporate sector has done in order to favour the rules to their point so they can maximize profits.

Companies now don't measure, "Can I break even in order to stay in business?" They say: "What's my profit margin? If my profit margin isn't high enough, I'm closing up shop, or I'm laying off." The Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce — which made how much last year; almost \$1 billion — is still laying people off. Why? Because their profit margin isn't high enough. There are all kinds of examples in the private sector where they're not satisfied with what they've got, they want more. And who pays? It's us, the middle class, the people of this province and of this country who have built this country and made it what it is.

So I get pretty upset when I listen to Mike Harris and the rest of the cabinet go through the mantra of the 10 lost years. It's revisionist history at its worst and the government should at least have the fortitude and the political courage and the decency to acknowledge what has happened in this country and what has happened in this province over the last 10 or 15 years, which is, we have undergone a massive restructuring.

The government says today it is going to deal with trying to balance the budget and restore confidence in the economy so the economy can be built up again. It got elected as a majority government with a platform, and a key part of that platform was the tax cut. I say to you today, it is irresponsible on the part of a government to give people a tax cut at the point that you're having to reduce expenditure, because it only makes it worse. The benefit is the government is saying: "Oh, if we give a 30% tax cut, it's trickle-down economics. The province of Ontario will prosper." You nod your head, but that's the basis. You give a 30% tax cut and people will take that money they get back from their tax cut and they will go and spend it in the economy to revive the economy. That's the principle. That's what you guys are saying.

There's a certain amount of that that's going to happen, certainly. There are a few people who will go out and spend that money, but almost 50% of the people who are going to get the largest chunk of money from this tax cut are people who are going to take that money, sock it into RRSPs or some kind of an investment vehicle, or are going to take the money and spend it abroad overseas or in the United States on holidays. How do we in Ontario benefit from that if half of the tax cut ends up out of here?

The rest of us are so worried about trying to make ends meet on \$10-an-hour jobs and \$8-an-hour jobs, because that's all this new economy is creating, that the tax cut we get because of our income is so low that it's not going to make a difference.



I say to the government, shame. You'd be better off taking that tax cut and not passing it on to people and trying to figure out ways to be able to build on some of the things that Ontario has shown itself to be great for in regard to economic development. There are all kinds of examples of what governments can do that is positive and not intrusive in the economy to assist the economy to develop the jobs that we need, to deal with trying to get people to work to rebuild the economy, but no, the government chooses differently.

I say to the government, shame on you. You'd be better off trying to build on the success of programs that were initially designed by the Conservative government: the northern Ontario heritage fund that helps businesses in northern Ontario get off the ground, get that seed capital that's necessary to be able to lever the dollar from the banks so that they can start up. You'd be better off to continue with initiatives that we started as a government or the Liberals started as a government that do similar things. Those would be positive measures, and I as a member would not be standing in this House criticizing you if you did that. I'd give you full marks. But no, you have taken the other way.

What also alienates me as a New Democrat is that this government has found a target. They have found a way to lay blame for all the ills of our economy. It is not only the NDP and the Liberal 10 lost years, because we're part of this target; it is the working poor and it is the welfare poor of this province who are to blame. The premise of what you are saying as a government is, "If you're on welfare, it's because you don't want to work." You will create workfare to get people to work because the premise is, if you force people to go and get a job on welfare, they'll go out and get a magical job somewhere that doesn't exist and get off. That's what you guys are saying.

You're saying that a person who is on welfare in the city of Timmins or in the town of Matheson or Iroquois Falls is there because they want to be, and if you force them to work 17 hours a week in a workfare job, they will choose not to do that and get a real job. I will tell you as the government, Timmins is doing well and Iroquois Falls and Matheson are doing relatively well, but not well enough to get full employment. There is unemployment in this province.

Those are some of the issues that we want to deal with as a party and that's part of the platform of Howard Hampton in his leadership campaign. That speech will be at convention. The point I am making is that the punitive measures that you have in the end only serve to target those people, number one, who are least able to defend themselves and, number two, who are at this point, being on welfare, really feeling fairly vulnerable, and you as MPPs know as well as I do, because they come into your office.

I'll always remember October 1990 when I was walking down Algonquin Street and a friend of mine whom I had worked with at the McIntyre Porcupine Mines, who had been laid off because of the recession, stopped me and he said: "Gilles, I've got a problem. I've been trying to apply for welfare because I've run out of unemployment insurance. Can you give me a hand?" As

an eager new member — you new Tory members over here all know that: as new members, you want to help. That's what you're here for, and I believe that.

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I walked into the welfare department of the city of Timmins, and when I walked into the reception area of the welfare department, half of them were people I had worked with at the McIntyre Porcupine mine, at the Pamour mine, at the Aunor mine and at the Hollinger property or from the Dome mine. Half of them were hardworking people, like people in this Legislature. The only difference is, their luck didn't hold out. They got laid off because of the economy. They got laid off because of globalization. They got laid off because of a whole bunch of reasons.

There they were sitting waiting for their welfare cheques or sitting waiting for their application forms, and I'll tell you, every one of them, every man Jack was ready to melt into the walls when they saw me walk in there, and I was trying to find a way out pretty quick. That's when it came home to roost for me. These people are not trying to milk the system. They are victims of the economy, and a government that tries to blame them for the problem is a government unworthy to govern. You're picking on the people who are least able to defend themselves and the biggest victims of our economy.

So I helped the individual. In the end, he did get social assistance benefits from the city of Timmins. You know when he got a job? Two years later, when we did Jobs Ontario Training. That's when he got a job. And you know what? He's still working.

I listen to the member from Cobourg — I don't remember the riding.

**Mr Newman:** Northumberland.

**Mr Bisson:** Northumberland — talk about Jobs Ontario being a total disaster, that everybody who was in there, when the subsidy from the government ended, didn't have a job. No way: 85% were still working a year after Jobs Ontario Training had ended. They were still working. That was a positive measure. It wasn't perfect, but it was a lot better than what you guys are doing.

To continue the story along the welfare line, the other part of this — you have all learned this as members; you've had to deal with this as Tories. I went to Joe Torlone, the administrator of the city of Timmins welfare department, and Darcy Gallipeau, his assistant. I said: "I want to have a meeting with you guys. I want you to sit down and go through the cases of this office and I want you to flag the percentage of cases you have here that you believe are fraud, that you believe could be fraud or you remotely suspect may be fraud." Do you know what the percentage was? Less than 7%.

The rest of them, when I looked at the names — which I shouldn't have done, but I happened to do that without their knowledge; I wouldn't admit that, but in this Legislature I can do that — those were people I knew. They were neighbours, they were friends, they were family. They were people who had been affected by the recession. It wasn't a very good feeling. Then I went off to the Ministry of Community and Social Services and met with Denis Lozier, the head of the Comsoc in Timmins, and it was a similar story in regard to what happened to people on disability and FBA.



Sure there are abusers, no question, but you know what's going to happen? Your welfare-workfare program — the abusers will still abuse. I hate to put it this way, but when the ship is sinking, the rats always find a way to save themselves. You will always have in a system — I hate to use that term because it's too strong. But the point is that you will always have people in the system who abuse. With your workfare program, in the end you will still have 7% to 8% abuse. You know what's going to happen? The individual is going to walk into the workfare area, do the job, and because they're covered by workers' compensation, "Ooh, my back." That's what's going to happen. They'll find ways to abuse, so what are you solving? You're solving nothing.

I say you're better to take a positive measure. Don't pick on them. They're the victims. Why don't we look at the other welfare bums of this province? How many people don't pay taxes? How many corporations like the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce — which made almost \$1 billion last year and said, "We're not happy, so we're laying off a bunch of workers so we can make more profits and pay less tax" — are out there?

That's not going to get you all your money. I recognize that. I was in government. You don't have enough money with the rich to eliminate the deficit of Ontario. You might be able to raise, if you're lucky, half a million dollars, but at least you're sending the right message. You're not saying that the poor are to blame.

I'm getting calls in my constituency offices in Timmins and Iroquois Falls and in Matheson, and I'm sure as government members you're getting them, from people being laid off from the Ontario civil service, the school boards and the cities, and they're wondering where they're going to go. There's not a lot of hope out there. And here you've got somebody who might be working at anywhere from \$14 to \$21 an hour, depending on the job he or she did, who's looking at a pink slip and saying: "Where do I go? I live in Iroquois Falls. I don't have a lot of places to go."

**Interjection:** You don't live in Iroquois Falls.

**Mr Bisson:** I'm talking about the constituent. "Do I move away as an individual," says the constituent, "to Hamilton or Toronto, when I've lived all my life in this community?" In Matheson or Timmins, it's the same. No. Those people don't have a lot of places to go, and do you know where they're going to end up? They're going to end up on UIC, and when that's over, guess where? They're going to be in a welfare job, they're going to be in your workfare.

I don't say that as a government you don't have to deal with the question of expenditure. Sure you do. That's what we were doing, and it's not easy. We paid the price. We as a government said, "Rather than laying civil servants off by the thousands and the tens of thousands, we will try to find another way."

That other way was a fairly difficult one for us as a government and a difficult one for the labour movement and for the civil service. It was called the social contract. We tried as a government to say, "Maybe if people were to share the work at one day per month, in the end we can keep more people." The civil service and a bunch of people in the union said: "No, no, no way, Bob Rae. We

want out of this one." And we paid the price. I don't believe the social contract killed us as a government — there were other issues — but we certainly lost seats over it. We paid the price. But do you know what? I say this in the House: If I had to vote for it again, I would, because it is a heck of a better alternative voting for a social contract than voting for what you guys are doing, which is a dismantling of what we understand to be the civil service of Ontario and the programs it delivers.

I believe we should have been learning from the social contract and saying as a government, either as New Democrats or Tories, "Maybe we learn from that." It was certainly difficult, and it wasn't perfect; I don't stand here and say the social contract was perfect. Certainly there were difficulties, but maybe we learn from that and maybe we find ways to share work better. Maybe we try to eliminate overtime. Maybe we ask whether it's fair that in Oakville where Ford has a plant, 36% of the cars built are built on overtime hours, while some kid down the street can't get a job. Is that fair? Sure, the overtime worker gets more money, but maybe the kid down the street needs a job more than that person needs the overtime money.

Why don't we deal with those issues? Why don't we penalize companies that pay overtime as a benefit because they don't want to hire new employees, and encourage employers to hire new employees by keeping the payroll taxes down? I admit the government has done some of that in regard to the payroll taxes, something that we did and that you're continuing. I haven't got a problem with that.

But I say to the government, you cannot give people a tax cut at the time you have a deficit. The other thing you cannot keep doing is blaming those people in our society who are the victims of the economy and use them as the scapegoats for your Common Sense Revolution. Rather, we should be trying to build positive measures. We should be trying to challenge each other on the left, on the right, and somewhere in the middle, for my Liberal friends, a way to find some solutions that benefit all of us, but don't benefit only one. Labour shouldn't be the only winner, but neither should the corporate sector. That's where I'm at. I stand for trying to find that way, and that's what I'll be working on over the next number of years.

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**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Questions or comments?

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound):** It gives me pleasure to speak on the long-winded speech we just had from the member for Cochrane South. These socialists go on and on about what we can do and what they'd do, but all they want to do is spend more money. That's all they could seem to do. They say: "Let's tax the corporations. Let's chase them out of Ontario." They've never figured out that if there isn't anybody here to hire people to work, there aren't going to be any jobs.

Maybe they should come in here sometimes and talk about specific problems. In these long hours of the night sometimes we get a chance to talk to people, and tonight I've talked to the member for Windsor-Sandwich about a problem she has in her riding. Sacred Heart school in



LaSalle has portables with holes, and we need to work on that. These are the kinds of things we should be doing in here, rather than rambling on with rhetoric, that if they were in government, they would have done something like this. They should have been looking after some of these problems before and they might still be around.

We have these portables in Windsor-Sandwich that should be looked at. Right now, at this very minute, our member for Wentworth North, who is part of the Ministry of Education, is talking about this problem. So sometimes in this House we can get some things done and it does help to be here, but it's unfortunate we have to wait right to midnight and listen to the kind of speech we just heard, all rhetoric and not meaning much.

**Mr Conway:** I want to make a comment about the speech. I thought the member, with whom I don't always agree, made a very strong case for those mine towns and mill towns and rail towns that are the reality of northern Ontario where on altogether too many occasions the bottom falls out, and when the bottom falls out of those single-industry resource towns, irrespective of whether it's Bob Rae, David Peterson, John Robarts, Les Frost, I'll tell you, there is a real problem. I thought the member made a good comment about the reality of people who never expected that they would need the social safety net because they never expected to be dispossessed and unemployed in their lifetime. I know something of what he speaks.

Whether or not the New Democratic Party prescriptions are the be-all and the end-all for those people — probably not. I remember Leo Bernier had the idea that if we built Minaki Lodge, that would be the beginning of a new day in northwestern Ontario. Well, it didn't quite work out that way.

But I think the member makes a very powerful point in reminding us, particularly in these resource towns like Timmins or Iroquois Falls, that if the single employer in the resource sector, sometimes the government of Ontario, sometimes a crown corporation like CN, decides to close the door and walk away, there is a history of 100 years of settlement that has to be dealt with, and I don't think there are very many members, of any political stripe, who would walk away from that. That's the point he made that registered with me.

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** I want to make a comment. I took a bit of exception to it when the member suggested terminology like "welfare bums" and "welfare people" leaving the area like rats. I have difficulty with that.

As I listened to that particular speech, all I heard was what we in the rural area call passing the buck. It's about time that the past governments realized and accepted the financial situation we're in now. When the Harris government got in, we found a debt, a very major debt. We reacted to it and we acted on it. That's the difference between what we have done and how we're dealing with it and what has been done in the past.

I can assure you that we can downsize, rationalize and restructure all you want, but in business, if you don't do something over here to generate some dollars, get the economy moving, get business thinking more positive, nothing will ever happen. There will be a ripple effect

from the tax cut that will turn this province around. There is absolutely no doubt about it.

My concern is that past members of this House have stood and talked about recession and how tough times were, but forgot to take responsibility for the situation we're in now, that this government, the Harris government, is going to turn around and is reacting to.

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** I enjoyed the speech from the member for Cochrane South. We disagree on many things, but we agree on many things, and one of those things is that our constituents really do need to be treated in a fair and equitable way regardless of where they live, and that the vagaries of the economy are often beyond their control.

I want to talk for one second about a situation in my constituency that I find really quite unbelievable, and that is, we've had ferry services — the Speaker would know — between Tobermory and South Baymouth on Manitoulin Island for many years. Around about 1972, if my memory is correct, the Conservative government of Ontario chose to replace two very old package freighters that were conveying people to Manitoulin Island from Tobermory in a three-and-a-half hour trip with a new ship that was built at Collingwood, which the member from Owen Sound would appreciate. That ship, the Chi-Cheemaun, as it was named, built a remarkable business in transporting people to Manitoulin Island.

In 1988, some 16 years later, another government chose to put a new ship into service to supplement the Chi-Cheemaun's efforts, and in so doing increased the ridership by 10,000 or 20,000 people. According to ONTC, it would have probably more than doubled the ridership if it had been allowed to stay in service for eight years. I am totally disgusted; my constituents are totally annoyed; we are upset that the government of Ontario has chosen to sell the Nindawayma for short-term political gain. That is unacceptable.

**The Speaker:** The member for Cochrane South has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr Murdoch:** It had been sitting there for five years.

**Mr Michael Brown:** Well, put it in service, you donkey.

**Mr Bisson:** In response to the member for Grey-Owen Sound and the member from Brampton — they talked about the NDP government not taking responsibility while in government — give me a break. That is the utmost amount of arrogance I've ever heard. We paid the price as a government for taking that responsibility and doing things to deal with the expenditures of this province.

To the member for Algoma-Manitoulin: He's right. At times government, like business, can make an investment that is all about trying to create more wealth. That's what that particular investment was all about — to increase the ridership so that we're able to benefit as a local economy on the island of Manitoulin, and the province overall benefits from that.

I want to come back to what I'm trying to tell this government: that people are the victims of the economy. The economy has changed because of all kinds of reasons, and what happens is that people are the victims.

I will tell you what happened to some of those people. I didn't finish what I was saying earlier. One of the



people who was in that welfare office when I walked in in the fall of 1990 was desperate. I remember him coming in to see me some time in 1991, maybe early 1992, crying in my office, a grown man whom I worked with, because of the situation he found himself in, being unemployed and on welfare. Eventually, you know what happened, the rest of the story? That person killed himself.

**Mr Murdoch:** Who was in government?

**Mr Bisson:** The member says, "Who was the government?" You, sir, are unbelievable.

**Mr Murdoch:** Who was in government in 1990? If you are going to crap on somebody, you better crap on yourself.

**Mr Bisson:** The member for Grey-Owen Sound is unbelievable and insensitive. The point is that people are the victims, people are the ones who pay the price of what happens in the economy. We need to find positive measures to give people hope, not negative ones. I don't want to go anywhere this government is leading.

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**The Speaker:** Further debate? The member for Ottawa East.

**Mr Grandmaitre:** I want to be on record too on this famous budget. This last budget was the most awaited budget since my coming to Queen's Park, for a number of reasons. The results of the budget were mainly good news, for the simple reason that back in November the Minister of Finance, Mr Eves, had introduced an economic statement announcing all the bad news and in this last budget he was trying to put icing on a very stale cake.

I want to go back to what this government did to get elected and introduce such a budget. I want to go back to my friend the member for Northumberland, who a little while ago said, "We're doing what we said we would do." I don't think the government was — I was going to say "dishonest"; I know this is not parliamentary. The government didn't come a full turn with the people of Ontario when it said, "Not one cent will be cut from health care spending." That was Mike Harris back in May 1994. "Under this plan, there will be no...user fees." That's the Common Sense Revolution.

What happened with our health care system? Very simple: Our hospitals were cut back by \$1.3 billion; health care spending was cut by \$70 million; the Ontario drug benefit program — user fees, \$225 million. Talking about user fees in health care, our seniors are being affected by this \$2 user fee and also having to pay an extra fee for drugs that are needed. I'm sure that most of our seniors who do need drugs today will suffer and simply can't afford to pay that \$2 user fee.

On education: "Classroom funding for education will be guaranteed." That's part of the Common Sense Revolution. I was told by the member for Northumberland that no, these dollars are being reinvested. I want to remind you that the member for Windsor-Sandwich who keeps reminding us that at l'école Sacré-Coeur in her own riding the school yard is full of portables. They dearly need a new school. I don't see any new dollars in the budget, capital dollars, to build this new school in the Windsor-Sandwich riding.

On classroom education: "Classroom funding will be guaranteed." That's part of the Common Sense Revolution. Elementary and secondary schools were cut back by \$400 million; colleges and universities, \$400 million; schools' capital budgets, \$270 million. That's why you didn't get your school at Sacré-Coeur, for the simple reason that they've cut back in capital budgets.

I know the government meant well when it introduced its Common Sense Revolution, but at the same time it didn't tell us exactly how people would suffer and how it would deliver this message. That's the problem, and people don't accept it.

Our municipalities are suffering as well. "We will work closely with municipalities to ensure that any action we take will not result in increases to local property taxes." Every day in this House people complain about municipal taxes and school taxes. Why? Because of those cutbacks. School boards simply cannot afford these cutbacks, so they go to the local taxpayers and increase their taxes. With municipalities, a 47% cutback in their transfer payments; very few municipalities can afford that. Out of our 834 municipalities in Ontario, 650 are considered to be small municipalities with very little assessment and simply can't afford these kinds of cutbacks. Our municipalities were cut back by \$658 million; special assistance, \$10 million. Our municipalities simply can't afford this.

On social services: "We will allow anyone on welfare to earn back the difference between the current rate and the new lower rate without penalty, without losing their eligibility." That's part of the Common Sense Revolution. What did the government do? Back in July 1995 they cut back welfare by \$938 million and social services agencies by \$43 million. They even closed down the JobLink training program. Recently introduced by the Minister of Community and Social Services, 48 hours ago, was another program similar to JobLink.

Law enforcement: "Funding for law enforcement and justice will be guaranteed" — again, part of the Common Sense Revolution. Our municipalities cannot afford to keep their police forces intact and most of them are cutting back on services. As pointed out by the member for St Catharines, in my own riding of Ottawa-Carleton, the new car dealerships had to fork over \$15,000 to complete an investigation which was started, and for the lack of money these car dealers were told, "We're sorry, we cannot complete the investigation for the lack of dollars." I don't think our streets are any safer and I haven't heard of any program that will make our streets any safer.

Transportation is another one. Transportation, road repair, maintenance cuts and GO Transit cuts — \$20 million. In my own riding of Ottawa-Carleton or Ottawa East, we were cut back, so much so that OC Transpo is letting go 140 mechanics and bus drivers. I think this is very unfair and now you're going to tell me, "Look, we formed a majority government." They formed a majority government for one reason: People were interested in the 30% decrease in their income tax and they thought the government was serious enough that they would take the next five years, the full term, to introduce these cuts.

Personally, I don't think they should have introduced this 30% tax cut, for the simple reason that this govern-



ment cannot afford it. They will have to borrow \$22 billion. If the deficit was the real problem, why borrow an additional \$22 billion in debts again? A little while ago, a member mentioned that it was costing nine cents of every dollar for interest. Now it's going to cost us 11 cents of every dollar to pay for these.

I say that the Common Sense Revolution was well-packaged; it was a slick job and I'm sorry to say that people bought it. But I'm sure that six or eight months down the road, people will be suffering in this province, and I'm telling you, I'm warning Mr Harris and his government, "Be prepared."

J'aimerais prendre quelques minutes pour vous parler des services en français en Ontario. Comme vous le savez, je suis le critique des services en français.

Les services dans les domaines de la santé, de l'éducation et des services sociaux nous touchent de très près. Les compressions budgétaires que je viens d'énoncer affectent la communauté francophone en Ontario. La chose qui m'effraie, c'est que la Loi 8, qui garantissait les services dans les domaines de la santé, de l'éducation et des services sociaux, je crois que la vision du présent gouvernement est d'éliminer ces services. Nous étions fiers de la Loi 8, qui garantissait les services en français, mais avec les compressions budgétaires, on pense plutôt que ces services vont disparaître.

La Loi 8 était une assurance pour la communauté francophone. J'ai même écrit au premier ministre il y a six mois lui demandant de garantir les services en français. Il m'a répondu par écrit que les services en français ne seront pas touchés. Alors, je lui repose la question : comment peut-on offrir les compressions budgétaires telles qu'énoncées tantôt sans affecter les services en français ?

On parle de privatiser un nombre assez considérable de nos services. Dans la région d'Ottawa-Carleton, nous avons 300 organismes francophones qui donnent librement leurs services qui, par contre, reçoivent de l'argent du gouvernement pour la prestation des services en français. Ces organismes, ces agences apprécient le geste du gouvernement, mais la rumeur est que le gouvernement va privatiser la plupart de ces agences. Selon la Loi 8, lorsqu'un service est privatisé, les services offerts par une municipalité sont exempts de la Loi 8. Une municipalité est exempte d'offrir des services en français ; les organismes dont j'ai parlé tantôt sont exempts d'offrir des services en français.

Peut-être que les gens en Ontario présentement sont fiers, qu'ils se sentent au pouvoir et qu'ils ont reçu de M. Harris une certaine confiance qu'on va avoir un regain de vie, que l'économie de l'Ontario va être renversée d'ici sept ou huit mois et que tout le monde va avoir de l'argent dans sa poche. J'espère bien que tout le monde va pouvoir profiter de cette nouvelle économie, mais si on regarde l'économie globale, je doute que les Ontariens et Ontariennes vont avoir de l'argent à dépenser comme promis dans la Révolution du bon sens.

J'ai pris plus de temps que je voulais. Je veux simplement terminer en disant que le budget, qui avait l'air d'un beau gâteau tout bien glacé, m'effraie. Je doute que les réalités, que les objectifs du budget de M. Eves seront

rencontrés. Qu'est l'avenir de ce manque de promesses ou d'objectifs ? Cela veut dire qu'il va falloir que le gouvernement emprunte encore plus d'argent.

**2340**

I will end on a good note. I realize that the Tories are in power. They have a majority government. I also understand that they want to change the confidence, or the lack of confidence, in the province of Ontario and people believed them at the last election and now they're in power. But I simply don't agree with the budget cuts and especially the 30% income tax cut which is supposed to create jobs. Because after all, you promised 725,000 jobs and you didn't meet your first-year commitment, so it will mean that this government will have to create 450,000 jobs in the next three and a half years. I think it's impossible. I don't care how good the economy is; I think their plan will simply fail.

**The Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr Michael Brown:** I appreciate the comments of my colleague. I think he brings to the Legislature always an insightful view brought from the eastern part of this province, from the Ottawa area.

I think one of the things that surprises many of us is this Conservative government, a government that was elected, as I understand it, with a mandate to have economic growth, with a mandate to look after the finances of Ontario. One of the things I really find passing strange is that this government that is supposedly about fiscal responsibility and solid economic management has missed its targets on job creation. It's been abominable on youth employment and youth opportunities.

Frankly, if I'm a Conservative voter, I think I might be a little bit surprised to know that this Progressive Conservative revolutionary government has already borrowed more money than the last Liberal government did in five years. That's quite an extraordinary record, Mr Speaker. I know those good folks up in Simcoe would really be quite surprised to learn you've already borrowed more money than the last Liberal administration which ran this province for five years. You've managed to do it in one year. Isn't that wonderful? You're out there attempting to borrow, so that you can pay for your tax cut, another \$15 billion. I think that's really quite exciting. I think the people of Ontario will find this one of the strangest economic ideologies —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Michael Brown:** "Voodoo," my friend says. Shades of Ronald Reagan.

**The Speaker:** The member's time has expired. Any further statements or comments?

**Mr Conway:** I want to just make a comment about my colleague from Vanier. I noticed in the Ottawa press, I say to my friend from Eastview, that Madame Gisèle Lalonde, your successor as the chief magistrate at Vanier city hall, has been summoned by Her Majesty's provincial government to do good work in Her Majesty's service, along with Mr Crombie. I see that Madame Lalonde is now bringing her years of public service and partisan —

**Mr Grandmaître:** A faithful Tory.



**Mr Conway:** A faithful Tory. The hour is late, but I thought perhaps you might have something to say, I say to my friend from Vanier, not just about Madame Lalonde's participation in the Crombie commission, because those of us who defer to your experience in municipal affairs would be interested to know what you make of the Crombie commission's mandate.

I thought perhaps Darcy McKeough might be invited to join that panel, because it's over 25 years ago that Mr McKeough set out to solve a problem that Mr Snobelen and Mr Leach seem to think is solvable in a fortnight. Mr McKeough and certainly Mr Crombie have had experience in previous circumstances. I wondered if my friend from Vanier wanted to comment on the Crombie panel and what he expects about the assessment review that is under way not just for the greater Toronto area but we understand for his community of Ottawa-Carleton and the province as a whole.

**The Speaker:** Further comments or statements? The member for Ottawa East has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr Grandmaître:** I would be delighted to give my colleague from Renfrew North the latest news on the Crombie commission or Crombie committee, call it whatever you will. I was looking at their mandate and I was very surprised at the mandate of the Crombie group.

Mrs Lalonde, yes, has been a faithful Tory. I hope she'll do a good job even if she is a Tory and lives in my riding.

**Mr Bradley:** That didn't affect your choice, I'm sure.

**Mr Grandmaître:** Oh, I'm sure it didn't affect my choice.

**Mr Murdoch:** Is there a Tory in your riding?

**Mr Grandmaître:** Yes, there are two of them. Your brother-in-law moved.

I'd like to say that I'm anxious to read the Crombie report, for the simple reason that I think their mandate is unrealistic. I don't think you can reassess every property in the province of Ontario in four months. Also, they'll be looking at decreasing the number of school boards, especially in Ottawa-Carleton, and I don't think it's going to work. I'm very, very anxious to see the first phase of the Crombie report.

**The Speaker:** Is there further debate?

**Mr Conway:** I'm happy to join this debate. I must say I waited for my friend from Grey county to get up and do in this assembly what he did this afternoon up in the great western peninsula. To launch an attack on his colleague the minister of lands and forests, as he apparently did this afternoon up in Owen Sound, is almost incredible. I know my friend Mr Murdoch, and he and Hodgson apparently share Reform Party cards. I would have thought that if there was one member of the Harris revolutionary troupe who would not be attacking the minister of lands and forests, it would be honest Bill Murdoch from Cape Croker and parts nearby.

2350

You know, Bill, in the Ottawa Valley, if you're going to attack somebody, you do it frontally; you don't do it when they're not around to defend themselves. I will be reading the Sun Times tomorrow with great interest, because the Bill Murdoch I know is a pretty straight-

shooting guy, and if he's going to nail somebody, including a colleague, he tends to do it with some notice, with some regard to the Marquess of Queensberry rules.

I heard the member from Grey going on complaining about spending money. I read the Grey county press quite regularly, and boy, that Te Deum of praise that he offered to spending on the educational account. "My mother," he said, "was a teacher, and my several relatives and friends and neighbours are teachers, and that Snobelen clearly doesn't know what he's doing." This let's-not-be-spending-money speech that he gives at Queen's Park is not the speech that he's making in the western peninsula.

I just want to say to my grey-bearded friend from Grey county, he is in a great tradition of Grey county politicians. I came here with one of his predecessors, and I must say that he hasn't reached Eddie Sargent's colour just yet. I guess that's one of the things that I like about my Tory friends. Have there been sins of commission over the past number of years? Absolutely. I've made my share. I'm quite prepared to admit that.

I must say I am struck particularly by some of the new members, not all of them, and I understand it's a revolutionary cohort, and revolutions are by their very nature extraordinary. But I've got to tell you, the absolute certainty of the course and the purpose, the intolerance almost, the fervour — there are other words that come to mind, but they're almost unparliamentary, and I won't use them — but seriously, I just think, "Wow." It will be interesting, and I'm young enough that I will be able to come back here in 25 years and look down and say, "How well did they do?"

I've mentioned this article before. It's one that I recommend to some of you. There's an article in the Atlantic Monthly, December 1981. It's a year in the life of Ronald Reagan's director of the office of management and budget. David Stockman was his name. He gave an extraordinary interview. It's an interesting article. Stockman was asked by Reagan to take over one of the finance offices, essentially. Stockman was a very bright, able, right-wing Republican from Michigan, who was a bit concerned, quite frankly, about the Reagan plan. The Reagan plan had three elements: sharp cuts in taxes; major increases in defence spending, which is a quarter — was then, at least — of all US federal spending; and balancing the budget. It was an Independent candidate in that presidential election, Anderson from Illinois, who said to Ronald Reagan, "How does this add up?" One of my colleagues tonight talked about voodoo economics. That phrase comes from George Bush's assessment of the Reagan economic plan. It was quite a tall order.

What's interesting about the article in the Atlantic Monthly of December 1981 is that it's one of the finance ministers who is in charge of trying to make this miracle work. Why Reagan didn't fire him for these public admissions is beyond me, because in my view it was almost a Bernie Ostry-like insubordination; not quite that bad, but almost that bad.

Stockman confessed a year into the mandate that tax cuts of this order of magnitude, with these kinds of spending pressures in defence, would almost certainly drive up the deficit, and 15 years later David Stockman



has been — that's not say that the Democrats don't have their share of responsibility, but the Reagan fiscal plan was exactly as John Anderson and George Bush said it was: It was voodoo economics. The legacy of that transparently voodoo plan is a mountain of US federal debt, interestingly, racked up by some of the most rigorous right-wingers that Washington has seen in this century.

The other aspect about the article that I suggest is interesting for people on the government benches is to read about Stockman trying to come to terms with the spending cuts that are necessary to make it work. I tell you, some of the most illustrious senators and congressmen of his own party, and he names them, said, "Oh no, you're not doing that to that dam in Oregon or to that appropriation in Tennessee."

*Interjection.*

**Mr Conway:** All I know is that poor old Stockman was complaining rather bitterly about trying to make the plan work.

North Bay, Ontario, is a place I know well. I can't think of a place that's done better by the spending of post-war governments, really since about the post-First World War governments of Ontario, than North Bay. I remember Mike Harris, of all people — I don't want to be too critical, but when we took office in June 1985 we inherited a spending plan that called for a deficit in the order of \$3 billion on an expenditure plan of approximately \$30 billion. When I first came here 21 years ago, one of ablest chancellors of the Exchequer I've ever known, Darcy McKeough, if you can believe it, presented to this assembly a budget calling for a \$1.8-billion deficit on about a \$12.5-billion to \$13-billion expenditure plan.

**Mr Preston:** And you expanded on that.

**Mr Conway:** The member for Brant-Haldimand is right; we did. I'm not here to say it was all perfect.

Let me be very personal. My enduring memory of the Peterson government was inheriting that Bill Davis commitment of June 12, 1984, calling for the extension of funding to separate schools. People like to talk about —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Conway:** I certainly fought a lot with Bill Davis, but I don't think anybody could question his commitment to the public good and progress and economic development. When Bill Davis and his then deputy minister at the Premier's office, Ed Stewart, a long-time deputy at education — I don't think there were two people here who knew education better than Davis and Stewart — made that remarkable commitment on June 12, 1984, I'll never forget the day, I say to my friend Doug Rollins, and everybody — "Ready, aye, ready"; I mean, wow. You talk about an about-face; you talk about a dramatic turn. Anyway, I'm not here to cast recriminations about that.

One thing I want to tell you that I will never forget: When asked, "What's this going to cost?" Mr Davis said, "It's going to cost about \$50 million" — I think it was actually \$40 million. I spent most of my time at the department of education trying to make it plain that we'd better not talk about that figure.

**Mr Murdoch:** Don't forget my two minutes to wrap up.

**Mr Conway:** I've apparently got 30, and if you come back, if you survive your next trip to the upper floors of the Whitney Block, Bill, I'll be here to listen to your intervention.

My point is, that was just one example of a spending plan that we inherited. It's fair to say that maybe we didn't manage it all that well, but I just want to say to honourable members that if it's blame we're looking for to spread around — this business about 10 lost years, I understand it's good politics. It was very effective politics. It met the requirements of the electoral campaign last year.

I'm certainly not here to insult the intelligence of so many bright men and women by saying that it is credible beyond front-page politics. Mike Harris? God, give me a break. I know he's votre chef and behind his leadership you must fall in line, but the famous line from Mike Harris that I think I will end with tonight is: "I'm from North Bay and I demand my share, our part, of the waste." I tell you nobody was more demanding in terms of spending money in his constituency — go into North Bay and look at that courthouse.

That's just one small example of Mike Harris bringing home the bacon, and now he's got the effrontery to go about saying, "That was then and this is now." I think that politicians of all stripes who engage in that business are not really doing very much to enhance the already tarnished currency of our trade.

**Mr Preston:** What happened to attacking a person to his face?

**Mr Conway:** I was just responding to an encouragement. My friend from Brant-Haldimand may not know that earlier today in the great county of Grey Mr Murdoch, in his inimitable and idiosyncratic way, let loose upon the minister of lands and forests.

**Mr Preston:** I understand that 100%.

**Mr Conway:** I won't recall the press reports of the member for Brant-Haldimand saying some rather direct things, which I appreciated, about Noble Villeneuve, the Minister of Agriculture, who has become quite voluble in recent days.

**The Speaker:** I would draw the member's attention to the clock, please.

**Mr Conway:** On that note, Mr Speaker, I'm happy to adjourn the debate until next time.

**The Speaker:** Questions or comments? Further debate?

There being none, Bill 47, standing in the name of Mr Eves, second reading: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say, "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**Mr Ed Doyle (Wentworth East):** I was premature, Mr Speaker, but it's my understanding that we have unanimous consent to delay this vote until after question period on Monday, June 24.

**The Speaker:** Do you agree? Agreed. The vote is deferred until Monday.

It being past 12 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 10 of the clock tomorrow morning.

*The House adjourned at 2403.*



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Thursday 20 June 1996

Jeudi 20 juin 1996



Speaker  
Honourable Allan K. McLean

Président  
L'honorable Allan K. McLean

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 20 June 1996

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 20 juin 1996

*The House met at 1004.  
Prayers.*

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

### CHARITABLE DONATION CREDITS

Mrs Ecker moved private member's notice of motion number 22:

That in the opinion of this House, the income tax system unfairly favours political over charitable donations of \$200 or less; and

Since charitable organizations and the work of volunteers are a vital part of Ontario's communities that serve the needs of many individuals and enrich the quality of life we enjoy in Ontario; and

Since promoting the spirit of volunteerism and the work of charitable community organizations is a high priority for the government of Ontario; and

Since the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy has submitted to the federal government that there should be an increase in credits for charitable donations; and

Since studies indicate that increasing the tax credit can increase the amount donated by those who file for credits; and

Since tax credits for charitable donations are the responsibility of the government of Canada;

Therefore the government of Ontario should pursue discussions with the government of Canada to explore the feasibility of increasing charitable credits on contributions of \$200 or less so that they are equivalent to credits for political donations.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** The member has 10 minutes.

**Mrs Janet Ecker (Durham West):** I am pleased to have the opportunity to present my private member's resolution today. It's a resolution which, if adopted, might ultimately result in changes in our system of tax credits for charitable donations which will help encourage individuals to donate money to the many charitable organizations which contribute so much to the betterment of our communities.

As it stands now, if you make a \$200 contribution to a political party, you get a tax credit of about \$150. That's a very nice incentive for those who may wish to financially support our democratic process and the party of their choice, but if you give that same amount to a charitable organization, you only get a credit of approximately \$53. That's \$97 less.

I believe that this situation is inequitable and it is time it should be addressed. Therefore, I am asking for the support of this House for my resolution. It asks our

government to encourage the federal government to amend the Income Tax Act so that the tax credit on a charitable donation of \$200 or less is increased to the same level one would receive for making an equivalent political donation. In other words, political and charitable donors will receive an equitable tax break.

This rather cumbersome mechanism is necessary because the authority for tax credits on charitable donations rests with Ottawa, while legislation governing political donations comes under both provincial and federal jurisdiction. Be that as it may, the net result of this initiative, if successful, will be to make it financially more attractive for individuals to make charitable donations.

I'd like to quote from some research that was done by the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, and I would be remiss if I did not thank them for their advice and the help and support they have given me in preparing this motion today. They are an organization which is dedicated to encouraging support for the volunteer in the charitable sector. In some recent research that they did, they found that charitable tax credits do indeed encourage donors to make larger gifts to charitable organizations. They found that on average those who claimed the tax credit donated three times as much as those who did not submit receipts. They also found that 80% of Canadians who are aware of the tax incentive to donate said it positively affects the amount that they will donate to charitable organizations.

The philanthropy centre has been lobbying Ottawa to provide more tax credits to encourage charitable giving and it appears that perhaps they are beginning to make some headway. The federal government has recognized the importance of supporting the charitable sector, and I understand the Department of Finance has recently announced that it will be exploring ways that it can do this. I hope they will take note of the resolution we are debating today.

Here in Ontario we've already taken many steps in this direction to help support the volunteer and the charitable sector. For example, there was the announcement of the breakfast program yesterday. The Premier supported that initiative. It's the partnership that we are able to have with the Canadian Living Foundation for Families and the grocery foundation together to launch such initiatives and I think it demonstrates the kind of government, volunteer and community and corporate partnership that is so important for continuing with this sector.

We introduced legislation to establish crown foundations for many public institutions. It's another initiative my colleague from St Andrew-St Patrick, Isabel Bassett, is to be commended for, for all her hard work in making that come to fruition. We've also in our budget men-



tioned many initiatives that will help charitable organizations to gain more resources, the kind of resources they need to keep their work going. I'd also like to mention the volunteer initiative that my colleague from Durham-York, Julia Munro, is working on as well.

1010

Passage of this resolution today, I believe, will continue these worthwhile efforts to strengthen and encourage the support for our charitable organizations and the many volunteers who support them.

The inspiration to put forward this motion has come to me from many sources.

First, I must say I have come from a family where we were raised to give back to the community to the extent that we were able, and that is a principle I have tried to follow in my own life.

Second, my husband and I have the privilege of living in a community, Ajax-Pickering, that has a very strong volunteer and charitable sector, and over the years I've had the privilege of working with the many talented individuals who have given so freely of their time, their resources and their services to improve the quality of life in this community.

I'm very pleased to welcome to the members' gallery today Mrs Gale Mossman, who is from Durham region, who is the chair of the Durham Region Community Foundation, which is dedicated to raising substantial amounts of money for charitable operations within Durham region. She's vice-chair of the Ajax-Pickering hospital board, and also a past chair of the United Way. She has come today to lend her support for this resolution and I very much appreciate that. She has been an untiring and dedicated volunteer who I believe can truly say that her efforts have made a very real and positive difference.

Third, over the years I've seen it become more and more difficult for charitable organizations. As government has tried to take over more and more of the work of these groups, it's only served to undermine the sense of responsibility and commitment to our families and our communities, and it's actually also undermined the ability of charitable organizations to raise money or attract volunteers. Government pays a lot of attention to nurturing the private sector and the public sector, but frequently government has forgotten and neglected the volunteer and charitable sector. I've talked to organizations and individuals about how we can redress this, and encouraging donors to provide more donations has been one of the suggestions made to me.

Fourth, I must say I must credit some of our critics who, in an effort to fight our government's intention to provide a tax cut, promised they would give their rebate to charity. When I thought about it, I thought: "Why not? That makes sense." First of all, if they give that money back to the government we lose 20 cents on that dollar for the interest on the debt, so right away we're only dealing with 80 cents to give to charitable organizations. Also, charitable organizations can deliver front-line services more effectively: They understand the specific needs of their community better, and they're leaner and they're more efficient because they've had to be, so more money can go directly to services to help people. Finally,

it gives people the choice to support the community organization they would like to support.

I see my honourable colleague from across the way laughing. I know they don't support giving people choices to do with their money what they would like to do with their money.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** Sorry, Janet, I wasn't even listening to you.

**Mrs Ecker:** Well, she should be listening to this. It's very important, and it's a message I believe their government forgot in their rush to do what they thought was right when they thought the government could solve all these problems. What they ended up doing is undermining the commitment, the responsibility and the duty that many people in communities have had.

For all these reasons, I believe this resolution is worthy of support. In private members' hour we've often seen examples where we have put aside our partisan differences to support worthwhile initiatives —

**Mrs Boyd:** This is nice non-partisanship.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** What a joke.

**Mrs Ecker:** It's very interesting that they don't recognize the many times they've chosen to support private members' initiatives by members of this government or that we have chosen to support private members' initiatives from your side of the House. We do believe it is important sometimes, once in a while, in this place to set aside partisan differences. I know it's difficult for them to understand that.

*Interjections.*

**Mrs Ecker:** I sincerely hope — but their outburst may mean I'm being overly optimistic today — that this House is willing to do that again today and I look forward to listening to the debate.

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** I'm pleased to join the debate on the member's bill and to welcome also Mrs Mossman to the gallery.

I very much appreciate the work that charitable organizations do. Probably everyone in the Legislature has been involved at one time or another in community work. I was chairman of a hospital board, chairman of a hospital foundation. I would hope that the organizations Mrs Mossman's involved in also feel welcome to come down here and point out to the government some of its shortcomings as well. While I appreciate this bill, in my judgement we're dealing with a government that is undermining much of the work of our community organizations, and this has to be judged against the backdrop of everything else that's happening.

Last night we debated a bill to establish crown foundations. The government has gutted its support for projects in the cultural organizations, gutted its capital budget for health, cutting our capital support virtually in half in this province over a two-year period. And then, frankly to try and calm the organizations, we are passing a bill called the Crown Foundations Act, which the government itself said, for 99.9% of all donors, it will have no impact. They cut hundreds of millions of dollars out of support for hospitals and libraries, and then we pass a bill that the government says in its own backgrounder will not affect 99.9% of donors. We had in the gallery people from the



library boards, from hospitals, supporting the bill, after their budgets had been gutted by this government — a small bone thrown to them.

What we've got here today is a proposal to give back a small little bit to charitable organizations at the same time as this government is gutting its support for our social infrastructure. And why? Because the government is committed to giving a 30% tax cut that will benefit the most well-off, the most successful, the most prosperous people in this province. A 30% cut in personal income tax, and more than half of that will go to families earning more than \$90,000 a year.

We see in the gallery today charitable organizations supporting this bill. I would just urge you to not stop now, to be back here holding this government accountable for the decimation of our social infrastructure in the province, and I use those words not lightly.

It is going to take several months, probably two to three years, before we see the full impact, but I guarantee it is happening. It's happening in my community, it's happening in every community across this province. Why? There is no doubt why. The government says, "We are going to implement our 30% cut in personal income tax." It will cost this province \$5 billion in revenue and it is being funded on the backs of our most vulnerable.

We see a bill today that throws a small bone to our charitable organizations. I fully support what our charitable organizations do. At the same time, it is a government that is determined to gut our social services.

A small concern I have about this bill is that it will reduce the government's revenues, and the government says, "For every penny our revenue is cut, we will cut spending by the same amount." I will say to our social organizations that while many in our caucus as private members will be supporting this bill, there's a downside to it. The government has said, "We are dedicated to two things: We are going to implement the 30% tax cut and we are going to deliver on our deficit numbers." I guarantee you, for every penny less in tax coming to the province, they will cut an equal amount from our social services. It is a treadmill we get on in dealing with this resolution.

I say to our charitable organizations that are watching this, looking for it to pass, many in our caucus — I can't speak for our caucus, but I can speak for myself — will be supporting it, but I would urge you, for the real battle, to get down to Queen's Park and make your voices be heard. We are seeing a fundamental change in this province and, for our charitable organizations that do so much good work, your voices are needed then, more so than now for this bill.

1020

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** I will be opposing the resolution introduced by the member for Durham West, and I want to explain why that is the case. Not that the resolution in itself is a bad one: What it speaks to in itself, isolated from what this government is doing, is a good thing. Who would be opposing, in general and in particular, the fact that individuals make a contribution, as individuals or as companies, to charities of their choice? No one is opposed to that.

What I'm opposed to is the resolution seen in the context of what this government is doing. If you see it in the larger picture of what this government represents and through its actions is doing, I say we need to oppose this resolution. What it does and what it's been doing is shifting the responsibilities away from government on to somebody else to deliver the service, either individuals or families or somebody else except government. That's what this resolution represents to me.

Remember this, for those who are listening: \$8.3 billion will have been taken out of the government's budget by next year — \$8.3 billion. Remember that the NDP had taken out \$6 billion already, and this government in its first year has announced \$8.3 billion worth of cuts. Add to that the income tax cut this government has proposed, an income tax cut that goes to the wealthiest of Canadians. I use the bankers as a fine example of what I mean: Five bank presidents, who earn individually \$1.5 million, collectively almost \$5 million, will get back \$420,000 on their income tax cut as a result of the measures this government is introducing. It is the wealthiest of bankers, it is the wealthiest of Canadians who get that money back.

That \$8.3-billion cut from the government's budget and, as a result of the income tax cut, up to possibly \$20 billion lost revenue means this government will be a lot poorer in its ability to deliver the essential services we need. And what are those essential services? They're in health, they're in education and social services: health, which constitutes \$17.3 billion to \$17.4 billion of our budget, social services \$13 billion or so or more, and education \$13 billion or so or more.

When you take \$8.3 billion out of the budget of the government, you're affecting, as you already have, health, by taking \$1.3 billion, education, by up to \$1 billion already, and social services, billions of dollars already; plus the firing of thousands of civil servants to deliver the services people need.

Including the cuts to the income tax cut, where we'll see a shortfall of billions of dollars this government will not have to deliver its services, it will devastate what we have been doing in Ontario. It debilitates the ability of government to deliver the services we need. Who benefits from the services we provide? Everyone. Everyone benefits, but particularly the most vulnerable people that charities, presumably, are helping out.

That's the problem I have with this resolution, because it shifts the responsibility away from government, which they advocate daily. They say: "Government is too fat. Government is spending too much. We should let the private sector take care of our needs, take care of our economy, take care of employment." This government says, "We're not in the business of providing housing, we're not in the business of providing the kinds of services that individuals and families should be providing." I say that's wrong. I say the shift that this government is proposing as a Reform-minded government is wrong.

If the public out there believes and supports it, I say God bless. At the end of this term, if the public supports this direction, I say God bless. But I say that as people begin to see the effects of these cuts on their lives, they will change their minds. Charity giving and the giving to



charity cannot fill the gap for what this government is doing through its cuts. They're attempting to do it, but it will not do it.

Voluntarism is something that is not new. We have been doing it for years. People have been giving of their time for years. Countless billions of dollars' worth of volunteer time has already been dedicated and donated by responsible individuals in our society. It's nothing new. But this government, by having the member for Durham West lead this glorious thing called voluntarism, pretends to suggest that it is something new. It is not. Voluntarism has been going on for years. Billions of dollars' worth of volunteer time is already being donated by people, but they are pretending and suggesting that with this new parliamentary assistant going out and talking about voluntarism, whatever she's doing, somehow we're going to take more time and more giving from people so that the services we're cutting as a government can be put back by more volunteers.

I suggest there isn't much more that people could be giving. Maybe there is, and so I hope you're right. I hope that we will have thousands and millions more people giving more of their money. But as you take, as you fire people, as the private sector downsizes, as unemployment continues to stay high and as people lose their income, they will have less money to give. The wealthy, who are already giving, hopefully will give more. Maybe that will be the case.

I suggest to you that you should tax them so that you, as a government, can give more money to those who need the services, as opposed to encouraging the tax credit that you're proposing, to have the wealthy corporations give more of their money to charities. Tax so that you can direct the money appropriately to the services that are essential to the general public.

The role of government is essential to good society, and you Reform-minded people on the other side are taking the role of government away for the good society to thrive. There will not be a good society in your government, in your term, because what you're proposing is an incredible gap between the rich and the poor. charity giving is not the answer. We need governments that are responsible and governments that are there to protect the vulnerable when the economy, as it is in this moment, is down and not doing very well. The economy is not expanding; it's diminishing.

What you are doing is abandoning those very people who, through this charity-type of motion, you're pretending to help. I suggest to you this is the wrong approach. I cannot support a motion that through the government's action denies and belies everything they pretend they're trying to do through this resolution. I reject it completely. I will not be supporting it.

**Ms Isabel Bassett (St Andrew-St Patrick):** I'm pleased to speak today on behalf of this resolution. The government always welcomes suggestions that encourage charitable giving. I want to thank my colleague from Durham West for her foresight and hard work in bringing forward this resolution.

As my colleagues in the House know, I have been very involved working on the Crown Foundations Act, Bill 71, which is before the House right now. It proposes to create

crown foundations for cultural institutions, hospitals, libraries and other institutions that qualify for this status. The aim is to prompt greater giving by making more favourable tax credits.

**1030**

Now I want to say right off the top of this that we do not see this as a panacea — I said this last night in the House — but we do see it as a help. It's better than nothing. We have a whole list of hospitals and cultural organizations lining up in hope that they can prompt greater giving and attract greater gifts, so on that note we are very supportive of anything that makes it more favourable for people to give.

Study after study shows that a more favourable tax credit makes people give to charities. It doesn't alter the fact that they're going to give; it alters the fact of how much they are going to give. This resolution is therefore extremely timely and in keeping with the government's general goal of encouraging volunteerism and charitable giving.

The current income tax rules are designed, as you know, to encourage larger donations, and they've been strengthened by the federal government in the most recent budget by increasing the 20% of your net income to 50% that you can deduct for a charitable gift.

While institutions rely on large donations, they certainly rely on the thousands of smaller donations that they receive annually from people right across this province. That's why exploring the feasibility of increasing charitable credits on contributions of \$200 or less will give a much-needed boost to thousands of charities by providing a further incentive for people to make small donations. To the extent that tax benefits encourage people to give, this change could lead, and I hope it leads, to a larger number of smaller charitable gifts.

Because this resolution relies, though, on federal income tax rules, a federal agreement would be required whether Ontario created a new credit or wanted to change its existing rules, so we will be working, as the member has already pointed out, with the federal government in this area, and we are totally supportive of anything that anyone can come up with to work things out so this kind of resolution can be brought in.

The federal government is moving in this direction, as I said, and in the budget, for those who noted the federal budget, the Department of Finance has announced that it will be examining ways to further encourage charitable giving and charitable activities, particularly in areas where individuals and communities are being asked to do more because of the fiscal situation of governments today.

Anything we can do, and I'll close on this note, to loosen up dollars for the more than 26,000 registered charities in Ontario will benefit all of us. It'll benefit governments, charities and the people who rely on the services offered by these very valuable charitable institutions.

I thank my colleague from Durham West for her commitment to this worthy resolution and I look forward to working with her to explore the feasibility of increasing credits for charitable contributions of \$200 or less. Anything I can do, I will certainly be there to help you.



**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** It's with a fair bit of sadness that I address this bill today. I am new to this House, but I see very clearly that this government and the representatives of this government opposite are capable of a very great level of hypocrisy in addressing what ought properly to be non-partisan issues before this House.

The basic impulse of the charitable world, where I worked for the last 10 years, is based on trust, is based on people's belief in what those charities do. Only about the seventh or eighth factor in terms of what makes people donate has anything to do with the benefit they get from government, and the research, for example by Millward Brown, shows that.

But it's not that direction from the honourable member opposite that is most disturbing. The disturbing part of this resolution is where the government of Ontario proposes that it is interested in volunteerism and the work of charitable organizations. Instead, and I appreciate the presence of someone from the Durham Region Community Foundation, I think they will find very clearly that the work of this government already is well, well understood by charitable organizations in this province. Charitable organizations understand that what you've done is taken away a tremendous amount of interest on the part of the public in the people who need the help of charities. In other words, by cutting welfare, by saying that services aren't needed, you've taken away the ability of people to see that those requirements exist in society. In fact, you've had an attack on the very work that charities do in this society. It's extremely problematic that this government would seek to gain benefit from the exact work that other groups are going to have to do.

The other damage that is being done here of course is the direct attack that's been made on charities, the money that's been taken away in the dollars that charities do put to proper use. In my own riding of York South there are over 17 programs that have had to cancel because they've lost the seed money that came from government. Rather than have a government that's willing and prepared to listen to charities, to listen to what they find out in their communities, to what their volunteers and other people know about the needs they are addressing, you're choosing instead —

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr Kennedy:** — thank you, Mr Speaker — you're choosing instead to go for the easiest public relations part of what charities have. I am indeed sad that this is the necessary route this government has decided to take.

**Mr Ron Johnson (Brantford):** So sad you are going to support it.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Brantford, come to order, please.

**Mr Kennedy:** The hypocrisy that is underlined in this bill is really shown by the fact that the government is asking the federal government to make a \$64 contribution while its share would only increase by \$34. I think when we talk about what is needed to make charities operate, what is needed is a partnership with government that is based on respect for what charities stand for. The values that charities stand for, which are tolerance, some fairness

in society, some basic ability to provide for people when they can't provide for themselves because that's in the interests of society, are being undermined by the other actions of this government.

While the members of the NDP choose to not support this bill, I choose to support it —

*Interjections.*

**Mr Kennedy:** — because I will not let this government use the manoeuvring that it does to take advantage of the sad fact that exists for charities out there for the next four years. For the next four years charities will need, precisely because of the actions of this government, every measure they can to survive.

**The Deputy Speaker:** There's too much noise in here. I can't hear the excellent debate. The rest of you will get your turn. I would appreciate you waiting for that turn.

**Mr Kennedy:** The amusement on the other side of the House of the various members makes it clear how little seriousness they put into their forethought for this particular bill and for the implications of what they're doing. The implications of this motion are simply to tell charities that the only way this government looks at them is as a sidebar to their other activity, that they don't respect their opinions about the direction that society has taken, they don't respect their opinions about the work that they're doing, because charity after charity has tried to get the ear of this government and has been unable.

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The government was not laughing at the member. The government was laughing at a remark that was made by another member in the House. We would not laugh at something so serious, Mr Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** That is not a point of order. The Chair recognizes the member for York South.

**Mr Kennedy:** I conclude my remarks by requesting that this government show its true intentions, if it is capable of those intentions. I believe it is. The government members are very defensive, but the good faith from charities cannot be bought. The good faith from charities will come from your actions, and this government should be sitting down with charities in this province and learning the true impact of its programs, because they will get a very different answer than some of that laughter and some of those smug smiles they're showing today.

1040

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** I want to, before I put my thoughts on the record, read this piece of business today, this resolution, and give kudos as much as I can to the charitable organizations out there who are working in some very difficult circumstances to deliver programs in an environment that is very difficult and very problematic to anybody who cares about people in today's society, and to recognize the efforts they are making and the need they have of all of the resources they can get their hands on to do that very good work.

However, having said that, I must say that I support very clearly the comments of the member for Scarborough-Agincourt, who says this piece of work needs to be seen in its context, and the member for Fort York, who very specifically pointed to the shortcomings of this approach to dealing with very fundamental and systemic needs of people who live in civilized societies



for food and clothing and opportunity for education and health care.

I would say to the people of Ontario and to the members of this House as we debate this particular issue and as we look at its merits perhaps on one hand and its difficulties on the other to beware of wolves in sheep's clothing, because this government has not in the short time that it's been in power shown in any particular way any legitimate, true concern at all for those among us in Ontario today who are in need or at risk or vulnerable or marginalized in any way. They have gutted programs and then on the other hand thrown a few crumbs or bones at them to say, "Well, you know, we aren't quite as bad as you perhaps thought we were."

I have to only for a moment reflect on the fact that in July 1995 all of us woke up one morning to realize that this government had taken almost 22% out of the pockets of the poorest and the most vulnerable and the most marginalized in our communities. Imagine you showing up at work one day and being told by your employer that for no good reason, no practical reason, because this province is still a very rich jurisdiction, you're going to lose 22% of your take-home pay and then having to go back home and talk to your family about that and the impact that's going to have on your life and your ability to be healthy and to take care of your very basic needs.

Then just a few weeks ago you declare in this House that you're going to set up a nutrition program for children. First of all you take away in a very major, fundamental and significant way the ability of parents to feed their children at home, and then you set up a program to feed them in schools and places outside of their home.

This is the thinking and the logic of this government. This is the thinking and the logic that goes into the resolution in front of us today. Unlike the Liberals, who will say one thing and then vote another, I will be sticking true to my principles as a New Democrat and I will be opposing this resolution.

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale):** It certainly gives me great pleasure to rise and support the resolution of the member for Durham West in her approach to the whole issue of involving the charitable and non-profit sector in contributing to the betterment and quality of life in this province. I think the same commendation has to go out to the member for St Andrew-St Patrick in bringing forth the Crown Foundations Act.

I'd spoken about this subject in my maiden speech. I'm particularly impressed with the way in which this government, unlike our friends across the aisle, have approached the whole issue of governance and assisting the charitable and non-profit sectors in this province.

I've been involved personally in a number of good causes like Big Brothers of Metro Toronto, the Salvation Army, Ernestine's Women's Shelter, the Humber Arboretum, the Heart and Stroke Foundation, Youth without Shelter and many, many others. These organizations, both locally and provincially and nationally, provide assistance in finding cures for cancer, helping the needy and the impoverished, and granting a terminally ill child his or her wish to visit Disney World, if you were looking at it in the context of the Children's Wish Foundation.

People donate to these charities because they believe they can make a difference. Their contributions are valued and we appreciate both what the folks who volunteer in this sector and the donors do in terms of making things better in Ontario.

We hear from the members opposite, especially the member for York South, who says he is so sad to speak about this bill, and we hear from the folks next door, who are committed to the principle of higher debt and bigger government.

The member for Sault Ste Marie says he woke one morning in July of last year to find out that Ontario had changed. I wonder why. If he'd really looked back at the history of the whole situation, there is a very vital strategic linkage that needs to be made here, particularly in the context of this resolution; that is, if the two opposition parties, when they were in government, had minded the store a lot better than the record shows, there wouldn't have been the necessity to make the depth and scope of the change that we were forced to deal with.

That is the strategic reality which both these parties, particularly the folks who are opposed to this proposal and favour big government overall — because that is part of the root problem in trying to help the non-profit and charitable sectors in this province, that government has pretty well taken over and become the big dominant so-called partner in dealing with the whole situation.

We need to put on the record that the members opposite really failed to deal with the strategic linkage of high debt, high taxation and stagnation that had arisen in this province. I know those are difficult concepts for some of our friends opposite to deal with.

However, to remove this a little from the partisanship into which we seem to have sunk, into which all of us have sunk, although I know those opposite don't like to use that word —

**Mr Marchese:** We like neutrality.

**Mr Hastings:** You do like the word "partisanship." All right. We'll accept it. At least the members of the third party are standing on principle, of bigger and fatter and more and more and more government, more bureaucrats to deal with everything.

I end by simply commending the member for Durham West, my colleague, for presenting this resolution. We hope to work with the federal government, that they will look at the prospects of what this proposal can do in terms of levelling the field between political tax credits and charitable tax credits. This is one desperately needed proposal that we need to get into reality. Let's hope that in the next federal budget we will see that in operation.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I will be supporting this bill this morning because I believe it's going to be necessary under the circumstances that face this province. Unfortunately, with the extremely drastic cuts this government has made to social service agencies in this province, it's going to be necessary for the volunteer sector to pick up a good deal of the slack. That's most unfortunate. In fact, you are creating business for the charities in this province.

I remember a letter from Bishop Asbil of the Anglican Church, the bishop of the Niagara Diocese. We were reading that in the House, and he made some very



compelling points about what this government is all about in its attitude towards the most vulnerable and the poorest people in this province.

1050

That letter really says why I have to support this resolution, because those people are even more downtrodden now, even more behind the eight ball, if you will, and it's going to require the volunteer sector, the charitable sector, to provide the needs for these individuals.

This I consider to be conscience money on the part of the government, and it's only one third conscience money. It's very clever. People in this province should know, if nothing else, this government is extremely clever politically. Those Republicans from the south who advise you are very clever people at manipulation of public opinion. I give you political credit for that, though I don't know whether I would give you other kinds of credit.

The second-stage funding for instance at Bethlehem Place in St Catharines, which is supported by virtually everybody in the community, was removed — the counselling money. Now they have to go out and beg for money from others. They will do it, they will work very hard at it, but they're competing with so many others who've had their funding cut. That's what you're going to find out there, that the competition for that volunteer donation is extremely tough.

I see us moving to the American system. Not every state, but most states have a situation where the most vulnerable and the least powerful are at the mercy of those who are powerful and rich — in other words, of the goodwill of others in a society. Sometimes that goodwill is forthcoming and people are assisted, and very often it is not forthcoming, and for that reason the polarization, the difference between the most vulnerable, the poorest in society and the richest and the most powerful continues to grow in the United States.

I find it's unfortunate that we are in this circumstance. I see no alternative except to support this bill under the circumstances which exist. Charitable organizations in this province have done an outstanding job over the years in meeting many of the needs that have been in this province, even without this government in power, but their role and responsibility will increase dramatically as a result of the mean-spirited cuts that I have seen by members of this government. You're very good at satisfying the people who already are the most powerful, people who already have the most money in our society, but you're not very good at assisting the people who are at the bottom and providing equality not of outcome but equality of opportunity so that people across this province have that equal chance to play a meaningful role in our society.

I'll support the bill only because it's necessary.

**Mrs Boyd:** I have only a few moments, so I'll be very direct in my comments. There is no one in this House, I think, who has not been part of the volunteer sector and who has not supported charitable enterprise, and none of us ought to be claiming that we're more likely to do that than the other. The reality is that we're all very privileged and we have the opportunity to do that.

What this resolution suggests is that those who have the opportunity to spend \$200 or less directly on charity

should get a further tax break. There are many who are being hurt by this government who would love to have the luxury of having \$200 or less to give to charity. The don't have that because of the cuts that have been made.

It is the context for this bill, not the actuality of this bill, to which we object. We object to supporting a government in throwing a sop to those who have criticized their behaviour towards those who are most vulnerable by supporting a resolution like this.

There's a huge difference between being in receipt of charity and being in receipt of an entitlement. One of the things we see from this government is a further effort to denigrate the poor, to put them in a position of begging for their basic needs. That is what has happened in this province, and it makes absolutely no sense for this government to expect members of this House to support them in that form of hypocrisy.

It is really distressing to me that this is being portrayed by the member for Durham West as being some kind of a turning point in terms of how we look at people's belief in whether or not we ought to care for one another as part of the community. We believe we ought to care for one another, but it should not be on the basis of charity, and especially on the basis of charity because you expect to get some kind of return, but on the basis that all of us should expect and owe one another a decent and dignified lifestyle. We can do that only through the tax system and through government-run organizations.

**Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre):** I appreciate this opportunity to participate in the debate today on ballot item 37, the resolution put forth by my colleague Janet Ecker, the MPP for Durham West.

I'll be supporting this resolution for several reasons, one of which is that I believe it will give charitable organizations a greater chance towards self-sufficiency so that they're not, as some might call them, government funding junkies. I'll also be supporting it because I believe more people will donate money to charitable organizations and that those people already donating money will give more. The more people make financial contributions to charitable organizations, the stronger the organization will be, and that only leads to a healthier future for these organizations.

The issue of increasing the charitable tax credits to match those of political tax credits for both provincial and federal parties, riding associations and campaigns is one that has been raised in my riding of Scarborough Centre on several occasions by many constituents. I'm sure the member for Durham West found the same thing in her riding.

One individual in particular who attended my pre-budget consultations and raised the issue there, the Reverend Kim Beard, is here in the members' gallery to listen to the debate today in the Legislature of Ontario. Reverend Beard has two congregations in Scarborough: St Crispin's and St Bede's. I know if the changes proposed in this resolution were enacted, many community groups or organizations like St Crispin's or St Bede's would benefit, just as other churches like St Boniface Church or St Theresa's or St Peter's or the Church of St George or Bendale Bible Chapel or Cliffcrest United



Church or the Church of the Master and every other place of worship in Scarborough Centre and Ontario.

I think of the other organizations in my riding that would benefit from this change. I think of the Cliffcrest Community Centre, Coping in Tough Times, the YWCA LEAP program, the YWCA focus on change program, the Metropolitan Toronto Association for Community Living and organizations like Youth Assisting Youth, which, I should bring to the attention of this House, had a 100-hole golf marathon on Monday and raised \$25,000. I know if these changes were made, that \$25,000 might have been \$50,000 in the first year of this event.

I will also be supporting the resolution because I believe it's consistent with the volunteer initiative being brought forth by the member for Durham-York, the parliamentary assistant to the Premier, Julia Munro.

Again, I'd like to commend the member for Durham West for bringing forth this resolution and to let the member know again that I will be supporting her resolution.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mrs Julia Munro (Durham-York):** It's certainly my pleasure to be able to offer support to this resolution this morning. I think there are a couple of comments I would like to make that come from the comments that have been previously made.

Something we all need to keep in mind is that in a democratic society, in a civil society, it is the mark of a civil society to have the contribution of its members, the contribution of its members to be able to support the quality of lifestyle that we all enjoy. When we look back on our cultural tradition in this province, it has been one of contribution to community.

I believe it's the role of government then to provide the opportunity for people to take responsibility within their own community. We're talking about public life, and democratic society rests on the encouragement, the nurturing, the opportunities that government can provide for people to take part in public life. What we see here then is a recognition of that opportunity in the resolution that is being presented to us today.

Many of the people who have spoken have talked about the context. I'd like to just offer two particular examples of context.

Many ministries support volunteer activities today and continue to do so. I have, for instance, figures from the Ministry of the Solicitor General, and there we see almost \$200 million supporting volunteer work within the ministry. In the Ministry of Health, we're looking again at just under \$200 million, and that doesn't include the 50,000 hours of volunteer help that go into every Toronto hospital.

I think we are looking at this in a context of a community that traditionally has provided support and taken a role in every community's life in this province.

1100

**Mrs Ecker:** I thank very much my colleagues from St Andrew-St Patrick, Etobicoke-Rexdale, Scarborough Centre and Durham-York for their support and their advice on this. I also thank the members opposite for some very interesting comments and I thank those who will be supporting this resolution. I certainly appreciate it.

One thing we've seen very clearly here today is the fundamental difference in approach. Some members opposite believe that only government should be doing this, that somehow or other the government should be taking away the responsibility from families and communities. I don't think that's how we should do it. We've tried that over the last several years. It didn't work very well. It cost us more money; it was one thing that ran us into so much debt. It also undermined the responsibility of families and communities and helped to undermine the work of the organizations we all want to support.

The second issue is that somehow or other all this should be the responsibility of the tax system, that it should be on the tax structure to do some of this work. One thing I have great difficulty understanding from the members opposite is that somehow or other allowing people to contribute to help members of their own community is to be replaced by a government ripping away tax dollars from hardworking families that might well be able to support, to give donations, to work in community organizations if they hadn't had to work so darn hard in the last 10 years trying to keep their head above water just to pay the tax bill. I think that underlines very much the difference in how we are approaching this and how they have tried to approach it in the past.

I hope this will be of assistance if the resolution is adopted. I encourage the members opposite to support us in this and I thank them for that. I hope very much that this will be in some small way of assistance to all those many hardworking individuals out there who have made such a difference in our communities.

## CONSTRUCTION WORKFORCE FROM QUEBEC ACT, 1996

### LOI DE 1996 SUR LA MAIN-D'OEUVRE DE LA CONSTRUCTION DU QUÉBEC

Mr Lalonde moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 60, An Act respecting the participation of workers and contractors from Quebec in Ontario's construction industry workforce / Projet de loi 60, Loi concernant la participation des travailleurs et entrepreneurs du Québec à la main-d'oeuvre de l'industrie de la construction de l'Ontario.

**Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott and Russell):** I would like to begin the discussion today by saying that the bottom line of Bill 60 is jobs, therefore I want to emphasize the fact that this must not be seen as a political issue but as an economic issue.

Over the past few months I have spoken with people from Prescott and Russell, Carleton, Nepean, from all ridings in Ottawa-Carleton, Nipissing, Parry Sound, Timiskaming, Cochrane North and South, Cornwall, and the list goes on and on. People talk about unfair practices, unemployment and lost contracts. Through all these discussions I have not met or spoken to a single person who is against Bill 60. To tell you the truth, I have never met anyone yet who is against job creation, and this is why people support Bill 60.

Les gens qui ont pris le temps de lire le projet de loi et qui comprennent vraiment pourquoi j'ai décidé de



présenter cette législation s'accordent tous pour dire qu'il faut agir pour assurer la survie des travailleurs et de toute l'industrie de la construction en Ontario.

This government can no longer tolerate a situation that is responsible for massive layoffs and bankruptcies. Ontarians are losing jobs and contracts to Quebecers on job sites in this province. In many cases, those contracts are funded by the province of Ontario, which says to me today that Ontario is actually creating jobs for workers living and paying taxes in Quebec. There are 10,000 Quebec residents working in Ontario for every 1,000 Ontario residents working in Quebec.

When we look at the criteria that Ontario workers and contractors have to meet in order to work in Quebec, we understand why so many Quebecers come to Ontario while hardly any Ontarians manage to work in Quebec.

Here are some of the criteria for Ontario workers who want to work in Quebec: first, they have to obtain a competency certificate; second, pay a fee of \$100 for this certificate; third, join a union; fourth, indicate in which region they wish to work; and fifth, complete the course Health and Safety on Construction Sites.

What are the criteria for Quebec workers working in Ontario? None.

Here are some of the criteria for Ontario building contractors working in Quebec: first, they have to register their company in Quebec; second, obtain an employer number for Quebec; third, obtain a building contractor's licence; fourth, register with the Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail; fifth, register with the Fichier des employeurs de la Commission des normes du travail; sixth, register with the Commission de la construction du Québec; seventh, register with the Association of Building Contractors of Quebec; and eighth, appoint a Quebec attorney for service. All of this costing thousands of dollars and taking several months.

What are the criteria for a Quebec building contractor working in Ontario? Absolutely none. It's a free world.

I received recently a call from a man from Nipissing riding, saying that contract losses to Quebec contractors were slowly killing business. He said that the next year must provide hope for the future or many of them will have to close up shop and lay off more people. I have introduced Bill 60 to give hope not only to the construction workers in the north but to give hope to all construction workers in Ontario.

In eastern Ontario alone, at least 40% of the construction workforce is unemployed. In some trades, the unemployment rate runs as high as 55%, 60% or even 70%.

I would like to bring to your attention a few examples of hardship that have hit our construction people, and these are not situations that occurred 10 years ago; they are situations that our people have to deal with every day in Ontario.

As an example, Jean-Pierre Parisien of Hawkesbury Renovations, a well-known Ontario construction company, was the lowest bidder on a \$100,000 job in Quebec. He could not obtain certificates by the required date. He then lost the contract to a Quebec company. Mr Marcel Desnoyers of Curran, Mr Gilles Dubois of Dubois Electrique in Hawkesbury, all the same situation.

Electrical Cab Renovations, a well-established company that has been in business in Ontario for the last 12 years: To do business in Quebec, they must complete a health and safety exam; they must study seven manuals; they recently had to send three employees for two days in Montreal at a cost of \$280 each for the course alone. This is not including hotel rooms, meals and travel expenses. Two weeks later, they would like to do business in Quebec, but they are still waiting for their exam results.

Rolland Amyot of Orléans, that is a good one, worked in Quebec for over 28 years as a renovation specialist. I have a letter on file from his employer dated September 30, 1993, indicating he is a very good employee. In November 1993, he moves to Ontario. In May 1995, he advises his employer, a school board in Quebec, that he has moved to Ontario. In November 1995, he is no longer qualified for the job and fired. Why? Because he is now an Ontario resident.

Les entreprises Claude Major of Plantagenet: Claude received a phone call from his brother-in-law in Valleyfield, Quebec. In 1994, he went down to give him a hand to repair the siding on his house. On May 13, 1996, he received a notice in the mail to appear in court and was fined \$715 under la Loi sur le bâtiment du Québec. All this for giving a hand to a friend.

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I know that some of you don't like to see barriers come up, and it is a concern I share with you, but we have looked at this issue from all sides, and what we need is a level playing field to negotiate one on one with the Quebec government. If we do not get a level playing field where rules are the same in both provinces, Quebec will never be interested in negotiating, because the actual situation is most favourable for their workers and their contractors. Once we have the same rules in both provinces, we will be able to negotiate to remove the barriers one by one.

Je désire vous assurer que le projet de loi 60 a en vue d'imposer aux travailleurs et aux entrepreneurs en construction du Québec les mêmes exigences que les travailleurs et les entrepreneurs de l'Ontario doivent remplir lorsqu'ils travaillent, ou encore tant d'obtenir des contrats dans la province voisine. Le projet de loi 60 n'interdit pas l'accès aux travailleurs québécois.

I also tell this House that I have received resolutions and letters supporting Bill 60 from municipalities, builders, contractors and workers. It is understood that Bill 60 is not perfect, and I am prepared to look at amendments brought forward by all parties to finally put an end to this discrimination. This is why I ask all members present here today to support Bill 60.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Further debate?

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I appreciate the opportunity to join in the discussions on Bill 60. It's my intention, and I believe that of my colleagues, to support Bill 60. We think this is at least a positive step in the right direction. Members here will know this is a long-time-brewing issue that has been dealt with from time to time. As recently as 1994 there was an agreement reached by then-premiers Bob Rae and Daniel



Johnson that attempted to ensure that the barriers that were in place were dropped so there was fairness and equity between construction workers in Quebec and in Ontario.

That, in and of itself, did not resolve all the problems, but it was another step in the right direction, and I'm pleased to see that the Minister of Labour is now activating the Ontario-Quebec monitoring board, which was a part of that agreement. We hope they pay a little more attention to this than they seem to have to date. Perhaps it will even come up as the first ministers meet this week.

I point out, however, that we think there's a problem with Bill 60 in terms of its enforceability. As the bill is now presented it leaves the enforcement mechanism with the Ministry of Labour's occupational health and safety inspectors. The problem there is that there are only 34 inspectors in place right now. Their priority has to be health and safety, and I know there's concern with some of the unions, and certainly we share those concerns, about the ability of this small group of inspectors to adequately enforce the permit system that is suggested within Bill 60.

We also need to realize that the issue of health and safety is on the chopping block as far as this government is concerned, and we know that the support mechanisms, the support staff and funding necessary to allow these inspectors to do their job properly, has been further eroded by this government's cutbacks within the Ministry of Labour. This gives us real concern about how effective that kind of enforcement mechanism can be. However, as I stated earlier, the general direction is one that we can support and one that we think would help improve the situation.

With regard to the lack of ability of these inspectors, I think it needs to be said during this discussion that while I understand some government members may even be supportive of this also, the current government, the Mike Harris government has been very active in attacking the health and safety rights that workers have in this province, and particularly the ability of the Ministry of Labour, which has responsibility for enforcing those rights, to carry out its functions. So I suggest there will be some hypocrisy involved should any government members decide to vote for this, although certainly any time we can get them to do something positive around jobs, we'll be supportive of doing that.

Government also will stand, I suspect, on the motherhood issue, that this is protecting Ontario jobs and therefore, "How could they possibly be opposed?" They're protecting Ontario jobs, and therefore they're obviously doing the right thing and the righteous thing. I'm going to be listening very carefully to comments from the government backbenchers as we continue to debate this.

I think what we need to point out when we listen to this government talk about supporting jobs is what kind of jobs we are talking about. They don't talk about the kind of jobs they are prepared to fight for in Ontario because they know that their agenda is totally indefensible when it comes to the kind of decent-paying jobs that Ontario workers are entitled to. Having attacked health and safety standards, having attacked health and safety training, having dismantled the Workplace Health and

Safety Agency, this is a government that has attacked the Ministry of Labour's ability to enforce those regulations by withdrawing \$40 million, over 400 jobs, the very dollars and jobs that would be necessary to enforce this bill and the other pieces of legislation that are there to provide basic, fundamental rights to workers in the workplace.

This is a government that has brought in its anti-worker Bill 7, which stripped workers of rights that they did not talk about in the election campaign. You won't find it mentioned in the Common Sense Revolution, but there it is in Bill 7, now the Ontario Labour Relations Act of this land, which, by the way, they did not allow any public comment on, not one minute. That is their legacy in terms of labour legislation in this province.

We know the Employment Standards Act bill is now going out across the province because we forced them into that when they said that was just housekeeping, just a few minor clarifications. When we held them accountable and said this was much more than that, that you're taking away fundamental rights from the workers' bill of rights, which is the way workers see the Employment Standards Act, we finally shamed them into admitting that, yes, there are major take-aways of workers' rights and, yes, we will agree to province-wide public hearings. Those are yet to come, but it's further evidence of this government's track record of attacking the rights of workers, trying to pull a fast one on the public. But now they're finally being caught out.

We saw what happened as a result of Bill 7 with the staff over at the Macdonald Block, just across the street from where we stand today: workers, most of them immigrant workers, most of them women who clean the offices, not the most glamorous jobs in the world, who one day were performing those tasks at a collective-agreement rate because they are unionized and there was a collective agreement in place, and on the following Monday, as a result of Bill 7, their rights were gone. The wage levels and benefits contained in their collective agreement were gone and they went to work working for a fraction of what they were earning the Friday before. That's what this government did. That's their agenda. They have to defend that track record. That's what they did to those workers.

Just this morning, right here in this Legislature, the staff who work in the cafeteria and in the restaurant and in the tuck shop have been advised that as a result of a vote last night by the Board of Internal Economy, where the Tories used their majority, and supported by the Liberals — we were the only ones who opposed it — this government has decided to take away decent wage levels and decent benefit levels that are paid to those staff. They're being told that in a few weeks they're coming back to work to perform the same jobs at almost half the wages and with slashed benefits. That's what this government did just today to working women and men who work in the cafeteria, who work in the tuck shop, who work in the restaurant, who work every day. This government has said, "You're not entitled to decent pay," and they're going to take away almost half their wages and they're going to let their friends in the corporate world come in and take over that business and they're going to



make a tidy little profit off that. Where's that profit coming from? The backs of those workers. That's where that money's coming from.

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That's the agenda of this government. When we listen to this government talk about protecting Ontario jobs, that's what they really mean. They mean jobs where the value of labour is watered down, where the ability of workers to form in a union in a democratic way is diminished, where the ability of workers to have their basic fundamental rights enforced is taken away, rights that this government did not tell the workers of Ontario they were going to take away if you elected them. Oh, no, they didn't talk about that. It's not in the Common Sense Revolution and you won't find it talked about in the campaign, in any of the videotapes or audiotapes or printed records. They didn't talk about that, but that's exactly what this government is doing.

So if we listen today to government members — and we haven't heard them speak yet — stand up and talk about protecting jobs and give one of their famous motherhood speeches, I ask the people of Ontario who are watching this to keep in mind the difference between what this government says and what it has done. Ask those workers downstairs right now who have just left the meeting where they've been told that their quality of life, their standard of living, has been slashed and their entitlement to decent, fundamental benefits has been slashed, and it's all in aid of allowing their corporate friends to come in and privatize and make a profit. The Liberals supported that. They thought that's fine. Go downstairs and ask those workers how they feel. Ask those workers who go in and clean the offices how they feel about going in and earning almost half of what they did the day before. Where's the fairness in that?

Then of course we've recently got the announcement of workfare, another idea the government has in terms of its vision of what work is. We're talking about forcing people to go out and work in communities because this government has to keep a promise that unfortunately appealed to some of the darker aspects of the way people feel at this time. We know this happened in the Depression. It happens in times of economic downturn when people are frightened and they're looking for someone or something to blame, and this government tapped into that.

They talk about workfare as some idea of creating jobs. You've got to go out and work almost in a chain gang so that you can eat and survive. That's creating jobs? Slashing the benefits and wages of people who clean offices for a living and work in a tuck shop: That's creating jobs? Quite the opposite.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** I'd ask the members for Grey-Owen Sound and Nepean to come to order so that we can continue.

**Mr Christopherson:** Well, Mr Speaker, the best —

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound):** What's your platform? You don't have one. That's the problem.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I'll ask once more the member for Grey-Owen Sound to come to order or I'll —

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** Name them, Mr Speaker. Kick them out. No respect.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for Hamilton Centre.

**Mr Christopherson:** The best that they can do — and, please, I've only got a minute or two. Don't interrupt again. Let them go on; it doesn't matter. It's only their heckling. That's the best they can offer up because they can't stand in their place and offer an honourable defence of their attack on working people in this province, and the evidence is there day after day after day and we see it again this morning. You'll continue to do that as you enact your mean-spirited agenda that wants to harmonize us with the southern United States, with some of the worst labour practices in the world, the worst environmental protection in the world. That's what you mean by an even playing field.

In summary, if we hear government members talk in support of Bill 60 — and I want to compliment my colleague for introducing this bill. I know that it's a particular problem in his part of the province, and I want to commend him. We were prepared to come in here today to make special exception to deal with this private members' hour so that we could deal with this important bill. I want to pay him the credit that he's due, and I do hope indeed the government does support it, because at least it's some indication that we can get through to you that you need to do something about jobs, real jobs.

You've said you're going to produce all kinds of jobs. First of all, we know you're not going to create the number of jobs you said you would. Your own budget documents show that. Just as important, there's the whole issue of the kinds of jobs. This government will at some point in its mandate have to go back to the people and explain and defend why it was okay to go after the poorest of the poor, to go after the disabled, to take away the rights of workers, to weaken unions, to weaken the value of labour, that somehow that's going to make this a better province, that that's our future. I don't think they can do it.

I think the legacy they'll leave behind will finally usurp the words they speak, because right now that's all that's happening: People are listening to the words. But the words are hollow; the actions matter. The actions matter, and the actions of this government have been to go after workers' rights, to go after the ability of the ordinary citizen in this province to have a decent standard of living. That's your agenda. The evidence is there. You continue to do it.

We know you're going to open up the Occupational Health and Safety Act. There's another review of the Employment Standards Act. That means more rights being ripped away from people. All of this will eventually catch up with you, and when it does, there will be a day of reckoning.

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** Before I begin my remarks on Bill 60, I think it's very important to put something on the record: This Minister of Labour and this government are committed to not reducing the number of health and safety inspectors. It's important to put on the record that Bob Rae cut the number of health and safety inspectors in this province by almost 8% in five years, and all of you voted for it. You cut health and safety inspectors and this minister didn't. The gall to stand in



your place and say the things you do when you cut health and safety inspectors is incredible, just incredible.

C'est mon plaisir ce matin d'avoir l'opportunité de parler au sujet du projet de loi 60, qui était présenté par mon collègue le député de Prescott et Russell. Je voudrais féliciter mon collègue pour tous ses efforts dans le domaine de la main-d'oeuvre de l'industrie de la construction dans notre région de l'est de l'Ontario.

I certainly share the member's strong concern about fairness and equity for workers in Ontario. At the outset, I'd like to say that I'd rather we didn't have to deal with legislation of this nature, but the fact is that construction workers and contractors in eastern Ontario are not enjoying a level playing field and it's costing us jobs. This inequity has got to stop. This bill before us sends a very clear message to our friends in Quebec that we want and demand a more level playing field.

I would also like to indicate to the member opposite and to the House that my colleague the member for Carleton, regrettably, couldn't be here this morning as he had a previous commitment in the riding: He had a meeting with the Ontario Economic Development Corp at this hour. He sponsored a resolution on this issue back in 1993 and wanted me to personally put on the record his strong support on this issue. I should indicate that the member for Carleton has been a real asset to the people of eastern Ontario as we continue to work on this issue.

At a time when the federal Liberal government is seeking to build and expand upon the North American free trade agreement in Mexico and Chile and other parts of South America, it seems remarkable that we can't enjoy free trade within Canada or, for that matter, that we can't enjoy free trade even within the national capital region. That companies could have an easier time gaining access to New York state than to Quebec is unbelievable and outrageous.

I think most members want to see free trade between provinces because it will benefit people in Ontario, it will benefit people in Quebec and, for that matter, in the province of Manitoba.

Let me acknowledge in this debate the very hard work of the previous government and particularly the previous Minister of Economic Development and Trade, Frances Lankin, for her work in negotiating the Ontario-Quebec labour mobility agreement.

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Regrettably, though, it was not as successful as we would all have hoped. No one in Ontario is satisfied that Ontario workers and contractors are getting appropriate access to workplaces in the province of Quebec. This government has accelerated discussions with Quebec to resolve what I believe are the very justifiable concerns about the access of Ontario workers and contractors to Quebec markets. Last month the Premier brought these concerns directly to the Premier of Quebec, Lucien Bouchard, who has made a commitment to act quickly to resolve this issue. But that commitment simply isn't good enough. Workers in Ottawa-Carleton want to see concrete actions from the provincial government in Quebec City.

Earlier this month the Minister of Labour established the monitoring body under the agreement's terms to provide the government with input and advice on the

implementation of the agreement. I'm pleased today that Alex Lolua from the Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario is in the gallery and to acknowledge what is going to be a tremendous amount of work on his part and the other members of the monitoring body. They'll monitor and provide input and advice on the implementation of the agreement, but that's only one step.

The establishment of clear objectives to market access and a specific timetable I believe are key to resolving this issue. There must be clear consequences to inaction or the lack of progress on meeting objectives and timetables.

I know at first hand from my discussions with both the Premier and the Minister of Labour that this government is committed to interprovincial trade and to labour mobility and that they are committed to working bilaterally with Quebec to ensure Ontario workers and contractors are treated fairly, to ensure that that level playing field for jobs is there. I know that if we don't see action on these issues from the provincial government in Quebec, pressure will build to strongly consider the full range of opportunities and options to pressure the other government to treat Ontario workers equitably.

While I'm supportive of the direction of the member for Prescott and Russell's bill, I do have some concerns and reservations about the bill's implications. That's why it would be more advisable for the government of Quebec to work with the Premier and the Ministry of Labour to break down the barriers for Ontario workers in Quebec. That's something I believe most members of this Legislature would prefer.

My concerns about Bill 60 are as follows:

Provisions in the bill would contravene the Ontario-Quebec labour mobility and procurement agreements, and in addition they would contravene the agreement on internal trade.

Provisions in the bill could well leave the province of Ontario vulnerable to a charter challenge.

Provisions in the bill could prove onerous and complex to implement and would introduce major changes to construction labour relations in the province of Ontario. For example, if the bill passed without amendment — and I do appreciate the member opposite's desire to work with all parties and all members on this issue — it could require mandatory unionization of certain sectors of the construction industry. This government has taken a long-standing view that the question of whether a worker would like or would not like to join a trade union is not a question for government; that's a question for the individual worker to decide. Our government and I know most members on this side of the House would not take a stand on that. Rather, we believe it should be up to the worker by secret ballot to decide.

Despite those strong concerns, however, I do support the member opposite's initiative in this regard. I think he's brought it forward in a constructive fashion, genuinely trying to contribute, to resolve this unacceptable situation.

I believe the bill sends a strong and clear message that the people of Ontario want fairness, they want equity, and they want a level playing field for jobs in eastern Ontario.



**Mr Gilles E. Morin (Carleton East):** I am pleased to stand in support of my colleague's bill. However, like many members of this Legislature and like many of the constituents who have been bringing this issue to us for a long time, I am disappointed that this discussion needs to take place yet again.

Those of us who have been here for a few years know that members of each of the parties have, at one time or another, stood in defence of the construction workers of Ontario. As a result, this is not a political issue and should not be treated as such. Rather, the government should use Mr Lalonde's bill as an opportunity to right a long-standing wrong.

Unemployment in the construction industry is at an all-time high. The frustration of contractors and labourers in our border regions is intense. On a day-to-day basis, they are confronted by an imbalance of regulatory systems that loses them jobs while Ontario loses revenue.

What Ontario construction workers are asking for is not special treatment, but the chance to compete for work on a level playing field, a chance to let their excellence and true competitiveness win them the work they badly need.

Some would urge caution. Some say, "Let's not make waves, let's not incite separatist feelings in Quebec, let's negotiate and build further on the concession Premier Harris got from Premier Bouchard at their last meeting."

A letter from the Ottawa-Carleton Home Builders' Association, which represents 300 contractors and has opposed retaliatory action the past, states: "There are a number of people who suggest that continued negotiations with Quebec offer the best chance of obtaining more equitable access to Quebec construction projects. However, years of negotiations have produced little. In defiance of the interprovincial trade agreement of May, 1994, Quebec passed Bill 46 which re-regulated their residential construction industry and which now significantly restricts employment opportunities for Ontario residents.

"While it has been two years since the signing of the interprovincial trade agreement, Quebec has yet to enact the necessary regulations that eliminate the need for a guarantor in Quebec, another condition of the trade agreement. Quebec has clearly demonstrated their lack of motivation to abide by the interprovincial trade agreement and stronger actions are now required. Bill 60 is that stronger action."

A local contractor wrote to me and said: "The time for talking is over. We need action. We don't need words. No more negotiating. You are the people who can make it happen."

Ray Cyr Roofing and Sheet Metal Work Inc is just one of many firms that must conform to regulations not applied to Quebec contractors in Ontario and that impede their ability to bid for contracts. "Firms that want to work in Quebec must open their books to prove their financial solvency; provide substantial security deposits; take competency tests in administration, project management and health and safety; join a Quebec construction association and register with the Commission de la Construction du Québec."

In contrast, a publication produced for Quebec contractors seeking work in Ontario states that "a business licence may be required from each municipality in which he or she plans to do business or work...some municipalities may require those persons to demonstrate their capability in their trades by passing verbal or written examinations," and while "many home builder, contractor or construction associations operate at the provincial, regional and municipal levels, membership is not mandatory."

Lax enforcement of our retail sales tax allows Quebec contractors to underbid Ontario firms by the percentage of sales tax they are not obliged to pay either in Ontario or Quebec. Naturally, this results in a significant loss of work and of revenue for Ontario.

Similarly, fuel tax laws are strictly enforced in Quebec, but not so in Ontario. This situation must be rectified.

Experience shows that only action will bring results. I remind the members that the only progress that was achieved on this issue was the result of the last government's threat of sanctions in 1993. Ontario's three-month embargo on Quebec products and services mobilized both Ontario and Quebec businesses. Their combined pressure on the Quebec government led to significant concessions and a bilateral accord. As a result, we believe this kind of measure is not provocative, but reasonable and understood by Quebecers as such.

That is not to suggest that trade barriers are anything but an interim solution. The bill states unequivocally that as the Quebec government drops each trade barrier, Ontario will do the same. What I believe all of us want to see is the removal of all barriers, the barriers that separate us into our little cells, that sap our strength as a country, that set neighbour against neighbour. Those barriers do not reflect the wishes of most working people. Individuals on all sides of the issue understand this. All they want is the chance to compete fairly.

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What we ultimately want is to work together in the spirit of free enterprise. Canadians working together will always present a formidable challenge on the world stage. Those are our values, and that is our vision.

However, I believe that if we take this strategic step, the table will be cleared for real progress towards ensuring the free movement of labour between our provinces. Passage of Mr Lalonde's bill will strengthen Ontario's position at the bargaining table and eventually lead to the cooperative future we all want.

Je crois que c'est une responsabilité de tous et chacun ici aujourd'hui dans la Chambre et de tous ceux qui écoutent présentement d'appuyer d'une façon forte le projet de loi de mon collègue M. Lalonde.

**Mr Bernard Grandmaître (Ottawa East):** First, I would like to congratulate my colleague from Prescott-Russell for introducing his very first bill in the House. I know he'll be successful at it. It is An Act respecting the participation of workers and contractors from Quebec in Ontario's construction industry workforce.

Mr Speaker, I want to assure you this is not a linguistic issue. This bill is about fairness, it's about equity and it's about jobs. Wouldn't it be nice if workers in Ontario or in Quebec, or in any other province for that matter,



could say: "I'm a Canadian and I have free mobility inside Canada. I can choose where I want to work"? Unfortunately, this is not the case if you live in Ontario and you want to work in the province of Quebec.

I repeat, this issue is about fairness, and that's the way the members of this House should read this bill. I've read some Hansards dating back to 1979, when Dr Elgie was the Minister of Labour under Premier Bill Davis, and the same debate took place. The same debate was repeated, and it's repeated again. Nothing is resolved. I think 1996 is the year to do something.

As recently as 1993, I introduced a resolution which basically would have achieved what my colleague from Prescott-Russell is proposing today, and this resolution was voted on unanimously by all three parties. The result of this vote — I must give credit to the former government and the former minister of economic development, Frances Lankin — produced an agreement, and I'd like to quote Frances Lankin, the former minister:

"The provision on labour mobility means that experienced construction workers residing in Ontario will have access to jobs on construction sites in Quebec. Under the terms of the agreement, the Ontario and Quebec governments will fully recognize the qualifications, skills, and work experience of construction workers from the other province. The agreement also provides that Quebec recognizes Ontario's occupational health and safety training. The playing field has now been levelled."

I'd like to quote Mr Harris, who was the leader of the third party, on the very same issue brought up by Frances Lankin, the former minister:

"Bill Davis talked for four years that I was in this Legislature; David Peterson talked; you people talked for three years. Unfortunately, you talked your way through the summer, when the construction season was on. Finally, we have a government prepared to take the action required, as Frank McKenna did, and let's give him credit for being the first elected Premier and government to do so in Canada, to say: 'Fair is fair. If you won't let us work in Quebec, you can't work in New Brunswick,'" or you can't work in Ontario. I appreciated Mr Harris's comments in those days, and I hope you will take my colleague's bill seriously and do something about it.

I have construction workers in my riding, contractors who are faced with \$42,000 in fines for having worked in the province of Quebec. I can't remember when a Quebecker was fined for working in Ontario. We have 5,000 Quebeckers crossing our bridges every morning in the Ottawa-Carleton area, where we have approximately 500 to 600 workers from the Ontario side working in Quebec. We need a level playing field.

Quebec regulations make it practically impossible to win a tender, and if they do, Quebec regulations make it so costly that they simply give up while Quebec contractors win tenders in Ontario and pay very little tax or no tax at all. We lose millions of dollars. Those practices are unfair and must be stopped immediately. Close to 42% of our construction workers in the Ottawa-Carleton area are without a job.

Let me quote you from different trades: the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, 55% are out of work; the Sheet Metal Workers International Association,

40%; the United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters, 40%; the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, 40%; the United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters (Cornwall), 70%. Mr Speaker, 40% of construction workers in Ontario are out of work. We must resolve this situation and we should do it quickly.

La loi que présente mon collègue de Prescott et Russell est une loi juste qui veut avoir les mêmes conditions de travail que l'on offre aux Québécois en Ontario. C'est une loi qui va aider les deux peuples, le peuple de l'Ontario et le peuple du Québec, à mieux s'entendre et à mieux partager le petit nombre d'emplois qui existent dans les deux provinces. Alors, c'est injuste que des travailleurs, des entrepreneurs peuvent travailler en Ontario sans payer de taxes et que le gouvernement de l'Ontario est le plus grand perdant. J'ai entendu les membres avant moi dire que la présentation de cette loi est une de justice.

I'd also like to address my colleague from Nepean, who will be supporting the bill, and I'm forever grateful to the member. This is a non-partisan bill, and we are willing to work with the government and share amendments to put an end to this injustice to the workers of Ontario and also the workers of Quebec in our province.

**Mr Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa-Rideau):** Let me join in the accolades to the member for Prescott-Russell and tell him how pleased I am. I'm somewhat shocked that it comes from the member for Prescott-Russell. I have a 22-year relationship with this issue. It goes back to the mid-1970s, when I was practising law in Ottawa and my law partner was very concerned about the inequities of this situation.

As a result, it forced me to bring to regional council and to Ottawa city council this issue, and with the help of my seatmate at regional council, the mayor of Eastview — pardon me; the mayor of Vanier — in 1970, who now sits as the member for Ottawa East, and my law partner of that era, who now sits as the member for Ottawa West, I was dispatched here on behalf of council to deal with the then Premier and deal with this issue.

1150

I remember the Premier telling me that the time had come for action, that there was an election coming in the province of Quebec in the mid-1970s, however, and it should wait until after that time. That was the election that saw René Lévesque come to power and saw this province and maybe the entire country shift into neutral, and it became politically incorrect even to deal with this issue in the Ottawa area. We had a Prime Minister at that time, as I recollect, who if you raised this particular issue you were called a bigot because it was deemed a linguistic issue.

I want to give credit too to the past government and the member for Beaches-Woodbine and the success she apparently achieved with the government of Quebec. What people forget is that not only were the regulations not introduced, as the member for Carleton East has mentioned, but the government of Mr Johnson, within weeks of signing that agreement with the Rae government, passed Bill 46, which re-entangled the issue at least as far as construction of residential properties in the province of Quebec were concerned.



I think the time for action has arrived. The question is whether this is the most appropriate action. Clearly, it is not. However, I agreed with the member for Carleton East when he said we have to deal with the issues and we have to play the cards we're dealt. Obviously it would be better to have the province of Quebec make the amendments to level the playing field, but that's clearly not going to happen.

We've heard some comments today about the imbalance or difficulties with regard to taxation. Let me outline for the House, because a question raised by the member for Renfrew North the other day zeroed in on that particular issue: In the Ottawa area right now we have Quebec contractors who buy their supplies in Ontario for jobs in the Ontario market, but they have them shipped to the province of Quebec and pay no provincial sales tax. They're supposed to pay it in their own province, but they apply for a credit and have it redeemed when they ship the products back to the Ontario job site. They then compete with our Ontario contractors for Ontario jobs, not having paid any provincial sales tax in either province. They're supposed to voluntarily pay it here, but there's no evidence of anybody having done that.

I think we should also look at other tax considerations. It isn't really a money issue, I know, but it is in some respects to the people, our constituents, who are making their living in the Ottawa-Carleton and eastern Ontario areas.

Someone mentioned earlier, I think it was the proponent from Prescott-Russell, the fuel tax. Routinely, on the Quebec side of the border in Ottawa-Carleton we're faced with people having their trucks impounded and the fuel tax levy of Quebec imposed. As a matter of fact, during the last campaign in May 1995 we had the truck of a food bank located in Ottawa but servicing both sides stopped, impounded and heavily fined during a few weeks before the June 8 election while delivering food in Gatineau because of that fuel tax law.

I suggest to you that if we tried to mirror that law and we were to impose it on Highway 417 this morning or any day, with Quebec licence plates, using our four-lane highway to travel between the nation's capital and Montreal, there would be an uprising and there would be a tremendous amount of revenue raised. I'm not suggesting that's appropriate at this point in time, but it's the next step.

I'd also like to tell you that taxation generally — as I recollect, and I don't do a lot of that law any more — the rule of taxation law is that corporations and self-employed people pay their tax where the money is earned, but salaried people and wage earners pay at their place of residence on December 31 of the taxation year.

With 40,000 or 50,000 people — construction industry, civil servants — coming across the border and only 4,000 or 5,000 going to work on the Quebec side, we have a very interesting situation. We have these thousands of people coming over, taking advantage of the services, the infrastructure, the police protection and other protective services provided by the province of Ontario, and then returning and paying their income tax to Quebec City, and at a time when a government in Quebec City is bent upon breaking up this country.

If you stop and estimate the dollars being lost, you know we're only a few months or a year away from imposing some kind of a withholding tax that will send shock waves through the province of Quebec. These are the steps I see forthcoming. I think they're natural extensions of what is contained in the member for Prescott and Russell's bill.

I waited for 22 years for the former mayor of Vanier to rise in this House in support of a motion such as this. I thought for certain in 1987, when he was in cabinet and my ex-partner was in that government —

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Am I glad I didn't have to sit before you when you were a judge.

**Mr Guzzo:** You're lucky. You wouldn't be here today, my friend. I made mistakes on the bench, but I wouldn't have made one that day.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**Mr Grandmaitre:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The member for Ottawa-Rideau mentioned that shortly after Mr Johnson came to power Bill 46 was introduced. I have a copy of Bill 46, which was introduced by M. Parizeau and not Mr Johnson. Would you please correct your notes?

**Mr Guzzo:** All right, I apologize. The bill introduced by Mr Parizeau was Bill 46; the one introduced by Mr Johnson was —

**The Deputy Speaker:** The point of order is taken. The member will do the action he sees fit.

The member for Prescott and Russell has two minutes.

**Mr Lalonde:** I really appreciate the points brought to my attention by the member for Ottawa-Rideau. I want to thank the members who spoke in favour of this bill.

Today, thousands of construction workers are sitting in front of their television screens watching this debate. The problem is not only in eastern Ontario; it's all over Ontario. Just this morning I received a phone call from a large contractor from Toronto. He was just the successful contractor for a dam on the Ontario-Quebec border. He had to go through so much paperwork that he had to end up hiring a consultant from Quebec at a cost of probably of \$100,000. When he works on the Quebec side, only Quebec people will be allowed to work. We really want a level playing field on this one. We've said it many times.

I would like to bring to your attention a resolution presented by the member for Carleton in May 1993. Premier Harris had these comments when he spoke in favour of this resolution on interprovincial barriers:

"I think it's a chance for us to send a strong message. As none of our premiers, Progressive Conservative, Liberal or NDP, has had the guts or courage to stand up and fight for Ontario workers, it's a chance for us members to come together to send a strong message to this leadership at the top."

I will end my comments by saying that this bill will help reach the government goals in job creation.

#### CHARITABLE DONATION CREDITS

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** We will deal first with ballot item number 37. If any members are



opposed to a vote on this item at this time, they will please rise.

Mrs Ecker has moved private member's notice of motion number 22. Is it the pleasure of the House that this motion carry?

Those in favour, please say "aye."

Those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

I declare the motion carried.

CONSTRUCTION WORKFORCE  
FROM QUEBEC ACT, 1996

LOI DE 1996 SUR LA MAIN-D'OEUVRE  
DE LA CONSTRUCTION DU QUÉBEC

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** We will now deal with ballot item number 38. If there are any

members opposed to taking a vote on this item, they will now please rise.

Mr Lalonde has moved second reading of Bill 60. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

I declare it carried. The bill will be referred to the committee of the whole House.

**Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott and Russell):** Mr Speaker, I would like this bill to be referred to the standing committee on general government.

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those in favour of the bill going to the general government committee, please rise.

Those opposed will please rise.

There is a majority opposed. The bill will then be referred to the committee of the whole House.

The business of this House being completed, it stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock on Monday 24 June.

*The House adjourned at 1203.*



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First Session, 36th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Monday 24 June 1996

Lundi 24 juin 1996



Speaker  
Honourable Allan K. McLean

Président  
L'honorable Allan K. McLean

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 24 June 1996

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 24 juin 1996

*The House met at 1333.  
Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### LEAMINGTON DISTRICT SECONDARY SCHOOL

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** I am pleased to rise today and ask the members of the Legislature to join me in congratulating past and present staff and students on the 100th anniversary of Leamington District Secondary School. The high school in Leamington was founded in 1896 and until 1949 was known as Leamington High School. From 1949 to 1962 it was named Leamington District High School, and from 1962 until the present 100th year it has been known as Leamington District Secondary School.

Of special note in this centenary year is the fact that James N. Hume served Leamington and district as a teacher from 1933 to 1970. From 1942 to 1970 Mr Hume, or Jimmy as he was affectionately known by his students, served as an outstanding principal. He will be remembered for his discipline and fairness by all of those who learned from him.

Colleagues, please join me in wishing Leamington District Secondary School success as it embarks on its second century of excellence in education.

### NORTHERN SUPPORT GRANT

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** Last week in Sudbury over 180 mayors were invited from across northern Ontario to come together to organize and deliver a message to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Premier of this province, the only member from northern Ontario in that government, that the Ontario northern support grant is important to small communities. That is one of the issues they talked about.

Members of the assembly know that particular grant is especially important to small communities like Matheson and other communities across northern Ontario that don't have the municipal assessment base in the industrial sector to offset the amount of money they need to provide basic services to their communities. Those communities don't have things like the Metro zoo, those communities don't have huge transit systems to run; in many cases they have no transit. We're talking about basic services such as garbage pickup, water delivery, cleaning and keeping snow off the streets in the winters that we have in northern Ontario, and northern communities are really upset and worried that this government is talking about getting rid of the northern support grant.

I urge the government to listen to the mayors of northern Ontario. They know what they're talking about on this one. They're the ones who have to balance the budgets of their municipalities at the end of each fiscal year. If this government takes away that grant, it means that communities like Hearst, Matheson, Iroquois Falls and others will be severely hurt and unable to provide essential services to the people they represent. I say to the government it's about high time they listened.

### GIOVANNI CABOTO

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre):** Today we mark the beginning of the 500th year since the formal discovery of Canada by John Cabot in 1497.

If he could be present with us in this Legislature today, he would barely recognize who we were talking about, simply because he was an Italian and his name was Giovanni Caboto. It was his visionary drive that led this enterprising explorer to the shores of what is today Newfoundland and eastern Canada under the banner of the person who shared his enthusiasm, the King of England.

Having claimed this dominion for the crown, Giovanni laid the foundation for Canada's future development as a constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy which would unite our bilingual, multicultural and regional traditions.

I think it very refreshing to consider, especially during the current debate on national unity, that Canada was discovered by neither the English nor the French, but by an Italian whose ancestry is the foundation for both English and French culture, and therefore Canada's.

It is in recognition of Giovanni Caboto that Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the successor of his original employer, will visit Canada next year to celebrate this great anniversary of Canadian achievement and unity. As Giovanni Caboto would have said, viva la Regina.

### FÊTE DE LA SAINT-JEAN-BAPTISTE

**M. Bernard Grandmaître (Ottawa-Est) :** Aujourd'hui en Ontario, comme partout au Canada, les francophones fêtent des siècles de détermination tranquille à survivre et à prospérer, et je veux leur souhaiter la plus heureuse des Saint-Jean-Baptiste. À Hearst, à Windsor, dans Prescott-Russell, à Ottawa, à Toronto et à bien d'autres endroits dans la province ils se rassemblent et ils se disent qu'ils sont fiers de ce qu'ils sont ; ils se disent qu'ils se souviennent.

Ce qui me rend encore plus fier, c'est de voir que de plus en plus des Canadiens non francophones se sentent proches de notre culture qui se laissent avec une grande joie emporter par la fièvre qui est dans le cœur de tout les Canadien d'expression française.



Ce n'est pas tellement le temps aujourd'hui de penser à ce qui divise le Canada et aux attaques constantes de ce gouvernement contre les quelques acquis de la communauté franco-ontarienne. Demain, nous continuerons d'apporter une contribution positive à la vie de ce pays. Demain, nous continuerons nos efforts en vue de donner une place au soleil dans cette province à chaque Franco-Ontarien et à chaque Franco-Ontarienne.

Aujourd'hui, il faut célébrer ce que nous sommes et ce que nous avons apporté à cette province et à ce pays. Il faut célébrer nos acquis et notre culture.

1340

### GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** We have come to the end of your government's first year in office and are now coming to the end of the first session of Parliament and the end of Ontario's economic viability. Your tax break is supposed to create hundreds of thousands of jobs, we're told. Despite the rhetoric, most people are going to be worse off, and this is particularly true in northern Ontario.

In the riding of Cochrane North: In Kapuskasing municipal taxes will be increasing by 2.6%, in Hearst taxes will be increased by 2.5%, in Mattice-Val Côté taxes will go up by 2.5%; in Cochrane user fees will be increased by 16%, and in Kapuskasing they're considering user fees for garbage disposal; 42 Ministry of Natural Resources jobs were lost, in Kapuskasing 11, Hearst 8, and in Cochrane 22.

For a quarter of a century, the people of northern Ontario had safe and efficient air service with norOntair. On March 29 norOntair ceased to fly and its services were turned over to the private sector. After only three months, one private carrier has ceased air service to three communities because the routes aren't economical. This does not bode well for the future of reliable air services for the north.

We've done well under your government in the north since you took office as the Tories. We will do even better under an NDP government in the future with our new leader, Howard Hampton, who truly understands the needs of northerners.

### CO-OP EDUCATION

**Mrs Barbara Fisher (Bruce):** I recently had the opportunity to address a co-op appreciation luncheon in the town of Walkerton. The purpose of the luncheon was to recognize the students, teachers and employers whose efforts ensured the success of this year's co-op program.

In fact, 300 students from Sacred Heart High School and Walkerton District Secondary School were successfully matched with local employers. Placements were in fields ranging from agriculture to retail sales to automotive repair, which allowed the students to further their career goals doing jobs they are interested in.

Students who enjoy helping others had the opportunity to be teachers' aides at an elementary school or to work with senior citizens, those who are more inclined to work

with their hands assisted electricians and mechanics, and for those who have a way with words, the local paper provided an opportunity to practise their writing skills. Even our future nuclear physicists had a chance to test their knowledge at the Bruce nuclear power development site.

The success of programs such as the one in Walkerton is among the many reasons this government is expanding co-op and work experience programs to give students more insight into possible career choices. By developing clear course requirements, expanding co-op and work experience programs, and introducing a formal transition-to-work training program in partnership with local employers, we will continue skills development and provide the additional experience that Ontario's students need to be competitive in today's dynamic workforce.

### NORTHERN HERITAGE FUND

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** As we near the end of the spring session, I want to direct my remarks today to the Minister of Northern Development and what appear to be further delays in getting the northern Ontario heritage fund up and running.

As we all know, since this government took office one year ago, the fund has been in limbo — for a full year. Only after continual prodding by the Liberal opposition did the minister return money owing to the fund and set up a functioning board to distribute the funds. Yet another two months have passed since the government announced they would finally do something about the fund, but very little has changed.

Information provided to us confirms that the new board, which will be meeting later this week, is no further ahead in determining how the fund will work. Decisions related to infrastructure, and simply how "infrastructure" is to be defined, have yet to be settled.

In addition, as a member of the standing committee on government agencies, I had the opportunity recently to interview two of the new board members. Both the nominees had very little sense of what direction the fund was going in, and in fact seemed quite prepared simply to accept the minister's direction in that regard.

The heritage fund is for northerners, and the decisions on how the fund should be distributed must be made by northerners, not by the minister and his officials in Toronto. I call on the minister today to allow his new appointees to be a real part of the consultation process that is so desperately needed to make this fund relevant to northerners.

### NDP LEADERSHIP

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** Speaker, I could hardly wait to get here today to share with you and with the people of Ontario my great excitement, having attended the convention of the New Democratic Party in Hamilton this past weekend.

It was magnificent: over 2,000 people, men and women, citizens of Ontario, workers, students, small business people, teachers, nurses, doctors, lawyers,



fathers, mothers, grandmothers, grandfathers, children, steelworkers, paperworkers, energy workers, members of CUPE, OPSEU, CAW and the OFL, people of all shapes and sizes, all colours and cultural backgrounds, all faiths, people of different sexual orientation — a true reflection of Ontario as we know it today. It was a quilt of great beauty and strength as we gathered with common purpose to speak of and forge paths to justice and fairness in Ontario, to form a common bond against the terribly destructive agenda of the Mike Harris government, to let people know that there is an alternative.

I want to tell you how proud I was of the performance of all the leadership candidates and to congratulate here today our new leader, Howard Hampton.

### GREY CUP 1996

**Mr Trevor Pettit (Hamilton Mountain):** I'm pleased to rise in the House today to remind the members and all Ontarians that the city of Hamilton will be playing host to the 1996 Grey Cup game, emblematic of Canadian football supremacy. The championship game will be played Sunday, November 24 at Hamilton's Ivor Wynne Stadium.

Anyone who attended the 1972 classic in Hamilton most certainly has fond memories of not only the thrilling last-second victory of our beloved Tiger Cats but also of the unparalleled hospitality of the people of Hamilton during the week-long festivities.

Over 30,000 of the 40,000 seats available have already been purchased and the remainder are expected to go quickly. Tickets can be obtained by calling 1-800-GREY-CUP.

With an all-Canadian CFL back in force and with an outstanding array of talent assembled in the eastern and western conferences, we're certain to have another epic battle as these teams compete to see who will walk away with Lord Grey's coveted silver bowl.

So I advise all members, Ontarians and Canadians to get ready to manufacture some memories, to get ready for fun and frolic; five straight days of Grey Cup magic in downtown Hamilton and in my riding high atop Hamilton Mountain. Get ready to experience a side of Hamilton that just might surprise you. Sure, we're still the steel capital of Canada and proud of it, but the new steel town is more than just furnaces and hardhats. Hamilton is home to some of the world's prettiest sights and some of the most advanced R&D in the fields of health and environmental science.

But most of all, we still know how to put on a party in a town that takes its football seriously. So be there. Get your kicks at Grey Cup 1996 in Hamilton during our sesquicentennial year. Oskee wee wee, Mr Speaker.

### ANNUAL REPORT, COMMISSION ON ELECTION FINANCES

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** I beg to inform the House that on Thursday, June 20, 1996, the 21st annual report of the Commission on Election Finances for the year 1995 was tabled.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### FIRST MINISTERS' MEETING

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I want to take this opportunity to make a brief report to the House about the meeting of first ministers that took place in Ottawa last Thursday and Friday. I might add as well that some of the follow-up from this meeting we hope will carry on at the premiers' conference in Jasper in August and my intention to meet with the leaders of both opposition parties over the summer before that meeting.

This was the first first ministers' meeting in almost two years. There was a lot on the agenda for us to discuss. From Ontario's point of view, I believe the most immediate issue related to the new arrangements between the federal government and the provinces to deliver job training. As you know, the federal government recently made a very serious offer to transfer this responsibility to the provinces. We believe this is a very good first step, with the potential for far more coordinated and more effective training and closer to those who need it.

Mr Speaker, 35% of Canada's unemployed live in Ontario; not a statistic any of us are very proud of. We feel strongly that the unemployed in Ontario must have the same chance at getting trained as the unemployed elsewhere in the country. This means that Ontario must get an equitable share of the funding.

I just want to make sure everybody understands that we're not talking about the dollars that are contributed to unemployment insurance of some \$8 billion from the province of Ontario; we're talking about the active programs that Mr Young has talked about transferring to the provinces. So in order for an unemployed worker in Ontario to get the same training as an unemployed worker anywhere else in the country, we need the equivalent amount of dollars transferred to us to deliver those programs.

At the meeting I made this point strongly to the Prime Minister. Giving Ontarians a fair shot at training is, we made it very clear, a precondition for an agreement on this file, and I hope we can have the support of all members of the House for this approach.

1350

Transferring job training to the provinces, though, is a key example of how the federation can be rebalanced and how it can be renewed. I personally believe that the federation does need real renewing in a practical and systematic way. Deciding who does what and making sure the programs are effective, efficient and fair is important to the future of Canada, and renewing and rebalancing the federation is, in my view, the most important contribution we, at this particular time, can make to national unity.

At the meeting we made progress on a number of other renewal initiatives.

We made good progress on the issue of clarifying roles and responsibilities in the area of the environment. We agreed to have environment ministers report back to us in November regarding a harmonization framework.



At the meeting the federal government agreed to engage with the provinces on the report of the Ministerial Council on Social Policy Reform and Renewal. This report made a number of useful recommendations about the federal spending power and about disentangling roles and responsibilities in social programs. We agreed that intensive multilateral work would be done during the summer and a work plan with objectives and timetables should be presented as soon as possible. I might add, it's our hope that that is at Jasper in August.

We agreed to move on a national commission to regulate securities. Eight provinces, including Ontario, agreed to be part of this initiative. This commission will be good for Ontario investors who currently have to devote a lot of extra time and resources to meet multiple sets of provincial regulations across the country.

We also agreed to do further work on a national agency for revenue collection and a national food agency. These agencies will eliminate needless overlap and duplication, resulting in less government spending, which is good for taxpayers.

A number of other areas where responsibilities might be transferred were reviewed briefly. We agreed to continue to work to devolve mining, recreation, social housing, forestry and tourism to the provinces. In a number of cases the provinces felt the federal transfer might amount to offloading of program responsibilities without the necessary funds. This was unacceptable to most provinces, including Ontario.

I want to be clear on this issue. We were in agreement that the federal government could save the operation dollars by avoiding the duplication and apply those to the deficit, but where there were programs we both agreed should be delivered, those program dollars should be transferred to the province for delivery.

Another item on the agenda was section 49 of the Constitution Act, 1982. Some felt the requirement under this section to review the amending formula within 15 years had been accomplished in the Meech and Charlottetown rounds of meetings. Others felt, for some legal reason or other, that that was in some kind of legal doubt. In order to address this concern, the Prime Minister decided to include this issue on the agenda for this meeting. The only point of debate after the meeting was whether it took 10 seconds or three minutes to deal with that issue.

We also discussed the economy and some actions we might take jointly to give it a boost. The federal government proposed another infrastructure program and we agreed to have our finance ministers review this issue and report back. I must say I continue to believe that the best way for governments to create jobs is to cut taxes. However, I know you will understand when I say there was not universal agreement around this table and no consensus among first ministers on this point. I did, however, secure agreement that governments would not raise taxes to fund a new infrastructure program.

We also discussed another Team Canada trade mission and agreed to plan for one to east Asia in January 1997. Unlike previous missions, it was agreed that this time the provinces would play a larger role in the planning process

to ensure that provincial priorities are addressed during the mission.

In conclusion, I want to tell members I was very encouraged by the constructive approach taken at this meeting by first ministers. If I could add into this, the tone also was one of optimism and very positive relative, in my limited experience, to other meetings and what other first ministers had said over the last period of time. I thought, obviously, it was magnificent that all 10 premiers and two territorial leaders attended, and not only attended but participated along with the federal government.

We agreed on a lot. Even when there was not unanimous agreement, we agreed to keep working in the best interests of Canadians. In my opinion, this is the sort of down-to-earth, step-by-step approach that people expect today of their governments and their first ministers.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Further ministerial statements? The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

**Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** Mr Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to make a statement. You may want responses first.

**Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside):** Responses first.

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** Okay, we'll have responses first.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition):** Let me begin by indicating that the central focus of the first ministers' conference, which was obviously a discussion of the devolution of responsibilities to the provinces in areas where the services that are being delivered can be best managed by the provinces, the jurisdiction closest to understanding the different needs of people in different regions of the country, is a concept we support. We recognize the fact that we can't treat the entire country of Canada as one homogeneous unit with all the needs being the same and that there has to be a flexibility in responding, and through a process of devolution many of the critical services that people need can best be tailored to the needs of people in that region by having the provincial governments accept responsibility.

Having said that, for that concept, for that principle to work for people, there has to be a corresponding readiness on the part of the provincial government to accept responsibility for continuing to provide this service, and that is where any sense of optimism about what Ontario can expect as a result of that first ministers' conference ends for us on this side of the House, because we look at what this government has offered to the people of this province in each of those areas the Premier has touched on today, each of those areas where potentially this province would have greater responsibility to provide for the needs of its citizens, and we see a government that has simply abandoned its current responsibilities.

The Premier recognizes in his statement that some 35% of Canada's unemployed live in Ontario. I wonder whether the Premier shared with his fellow first ministers that there are actually more people out of work in the province of Ontario today than there were a year ago when this government came into office. I wonder if he



shared with them his budget's projections that there will be even more people out of work three years from now than there were when Mike Harris came into government. I wonder if he shared with the first ministers the fact that they will not be able to deliver on a commitment, an absolute commitment, they made to the people of this province that they would see 725,000 jobs created. I wonder if they shared that information as a basis for what the Premier has described as a spirit of optimism at that conference.

I wonder if this Premier shared with his fellow ministers how many jobs this government has actually killed in the province of Ontario since they came into office, how many jobs they've killed for nurses, teachers, firefighters and police, the very people whom we need to provide the services. I wonder if he talked about the number of jobs that have been killed in the ministry of the environment, in the housing ministry, in the agriculture ministry and the natural resources ministry, all of those areas where this province appears willing to accept some greater responsibility for providing service to our citizens.

The Premier emphasizes the importance of job training. I find this ironic coming from the very government that has done nothing for job training except kill job training programs, the government that only a week ago announced a workfare program without a training component, even though it had made a very clear and absolute commitment that it would not only have training programs to go along with its workfare, but it would commit significant dollars to it, and yet we see nothing of that.

This commitment and concern for training come from a government that has cut funding for colleges and universities by some \$400 million and jacked tuition fees, making college and university education inaccessible for thousands of young people in this province. Then they talk about reforms to our secondary school education in which they would go so far perhaps as to actually deny a classroom education for young people who are not going on to college or university and give them credits for summer jobs that have no training component at all. I worry about this particular government accepting the responsibility for job training.

1400

The Premier says they made good progress on clarifying the roles and responsibilities in the area of the environment. I can only despair if this government claims it is now ready to accept greater responsibility in environmental protection. Just look at what they have done in recent weeks alone, as they have systematically dismantled environmental regulation and indeed the Ministry of Environment itself; as they have closed regional Ministry of Environment labs, even laying off one of Canada's outstanding environmental researchers; as they've deregulated land use planning; as they have privatized our parks and turned forest management over to companies, if there's anything left of our forests after they've burned down because this government wasn't ready to fight fires.

They say they're looking at devolution in social housing. God forbid, social housing, where they have abandoned any commitment to non-profit housing and where they stand ready to gut rent control protection for tenants.

The most galling thing that came out of this weekend for me was the Premier joining in the vow to fight child poverty. I only have seven seconds left. I only wish the Premier had renewed that vow and that we would see some redirection of resources to eliminating the level of child poverty —

**The Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I'd like to respond to the Premier's statement on behalf of our caucus.

**Mr Chris Stockwell (Etobicoke West):** So how come Howie's not here?

**Mr Wildman:** He's going to be here later.

I must say I am a little bit nonplussed by this statement. The Premier points out very clearly that he is in agreement with the other first ministers of Canada that we should be doing everything possible to ensure that there is not duplication and that it is clarified in our system of federal relationships which governments will be responsible for which programs. We all agree with that, but I am very concerned that we now have in this statement a Premier making a comment that he is concerned about the fact that 35% of Canada's unemployed live in Ontario. We are all concerned about that.

Then he goes on to say: "We feel strongly that the unemployed in Ontario must have the same chance of getting trained as the unemployed elsewhere in the country. This means that Ontario must get an equitable share of funding."

I recall the now Premier's statement when he was leader of the third party referring to the previous government in May 1994, when he said, "This government in Ontario is reduced to whining and squabbling with other levels of government." Surely we don't have the member for Nipissing now reduced to whining and squabbling with other levels of government.

Also, I must say that we are in this party very concerned that we may, in this process, be seeing a situation where this Conservative government of Ontario takes full control and responsibility for training programs, a government that has cut \$430 million out of post-secondary education and training, a government that has gutted the Jobs Ontario Training program, a government that has increased tuition fees, a government that is making it more and more difficult for single parents to get the training they require, a government that is forcing those people into a welfare trap, a government that says it wants to help, to give them a hand up, not a handout, but is simply cutting the handout. There's no hand up whatever from this government.

I'm very concerned about the Premier's statement about environmental protection. This is a government that has completely gutted the Ministry of Environment and Energy and is looking at deregulating the way we deal with protection for the environment and leaving it to industry. If we are now moving towards harmonization in this way, all it will mean is that right across Canada we're going to be harmonizing downward. It's going to be less protection for the environment, it's going to mean more deregulation and we're going to see serious pollution problems and degradation of the environment in the future in our country.



The biggest thing that is missing in this statement, though, is the paragraph the Premier used in responding to that portion of the meeting in Ottawa that dealt with section 49 of the Constitution Act of 1982. In that paragraph the Premier says that some people felt the requirement had been met by Meech and Charlottetown. He then said that others felt there was some doubt. He never in this paragraph or anywhere in this statement says what he feels. He never says what the government of Ontario, the largest province, thinks about the requirement under section 49 of the Constitution.

Surely it is time for the Premier of this province and the government of Ontario to show some leadership with regard to the renewal of the constitutional framework of this country. Surely it's time we were able to ask: Do we agree with those who feel that the requirement has been met by Meech and Charlottetown or do we agree with those who have some doubt? What is the government's position? How can the Premier get up here and make a statement and never tell us what Ontario had to say?

I suppose if there was three minutes of discussion of this at the meeting, perhaps the Premier wasn't paying attention. Perhaps he missed it or maybe he joined Mr Bouchard outside for a smoke. Is this government taking a position? Is this government taking a lead on the future of Canada? Is this government prepared to stand up for Ontario and to stand up for Canada? It's about time Ontario took a lead in renewing the Constitution.

#### SAINT-JEAN-BAPTISTE DAY FÊTE DE LA SAINT-JEAN-BAPTISTE

**Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** Mr Speaker, I seek unanimous consent on a statement on Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed.

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** As one of those whose ancestors have been here since the 1660s, I am pleased to engage the Legislature with regard to Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day.

C'est le 24 juin, la Saint-Jean-Baptiste. Au nom du gouvernement et de mon parti, je souhaite à tous nos Canadiens et Canadiennes d'expression française, peu importe où ils se retrouvent au sein du pays, une joyeuse Saint-Jean-Baptiste. Je profite surtout de l'occasion pour saluer la communauté francophone de l'Ontario, qui célèbre cette fête et nous permet de revivre nos origines culturelles ensemble et en français.

Depuis la création de la Confédération, l'Ontario a toujours reconnu l'importance de l'unité, de notre survie et de notre développement économique. L'Ontario a toujours reconnu l'importance du développement et de la stabilité économique pour l'unité de notre pays.

En tant que ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones, j'aimerais que notre province retrouve pleinement son potentiel bilingue, qui est un atout tout à fait spécial, et il faut en profiter.

Nous devons faire comprendre aux investisseurs que l'Ontario dispose des infrastructures nécessaires pour former la main-d'oeuvre dont ils ont besoin. La promotion de notre main-d'oeuvre bilingue nous permettra

d'être plus concurrentiels non seulement au niveau national, mais au niveau international. Nous devons donc continuer d'évoluer pour demeurer compétitifs dans la globalisation de nos marchés.

C'est pour ces raisons que mes collègues et moi sommes fiers que l'Ontario français est un exemple de la contribution ontarienne à la vision d'un Canada uni de l'Atlantique au Pacifique.

Je suis heureux que nos Franco-Ontariens peuvent s'unir en ce jour pour fêter ensemble notre langue et culture françaises, préservées depuis plus de quatre siècles.

La Saint-Jean-Baptiste est l'occasion unique pour les francophones d'un Canada uni de célébrer ce patrimoine et ces acquis. Je souhaite donc une heureuse Saint-Jean-Baptiste à tous nos Ontariens et Ontariennes d'expression française et à tous nos francophones à travers le Canada uni.

1410

**Mr Bernard Grandmaître (Ottawa East):** As I mentioned in my earlier statement, this is a day to celebrate la francophonie in Ontario and this is a day we should look at what unites us and not what divides us. It's a very important day for all French-speaking people, not only in Ontario or Quebec, but in Canada.

Je crois que l'Ontario a un rôle très important à jouer dans la francophonie non seulement de l'Ontario mais du Canada. Dans les années précédentes, les premiers ministres tel que M. Robarts, tel que M. Davis, tel que David Peterson, tel que Bob Rae ont joué un rôle important dans l'unité du Canada.

Lorsqu'on parle de l'unité du Canada, on parle de cultures différentes comme celle d'un francophone et d'un anglophone. Je crois qu'en Ontario, avec ces compressions budgétaires, la francophonie s'inquiète. Nous avons une peur présentement que, avec les compressions budgétaires, nous sommes en deuxième ou peut-être en troisième rang.

Même avec l'assurance du premier ministre dernièrement que la Loi 8 ne sera touchée ni modifiée, je m'inquiète parce que la francophonie en Ontario est suspendue à la branche d'un arbre qui s'appelle l'Ontario. L'Ontario doit jouer un rôle important au Canada, mais en commençant par l'Ontario, et afin d'assurer que la francophonie en Ontario aura une survie, la Loi 8 doit demeurer en place. Il ne faut pas changer ou modifier la Loi 8. Il ne faut pas transférer la responsabilité du gouvernement à d'autres agences telles qu'aux municipalités.

Les services en français touchent les services du gouvernement provincial, et une municipalité ou une agence n'a pas la responsabilité d'offrir ces services en français. Je suis convaincu que vous savez que la Loi 8 ne touche pas les municipalités, et je veux m'assurer que le message est transmis au premier ministre de l'Ontario.

The Premier of Ontario, Mike Harris, mentioned that he is just back from his first premiers' conference, and I know the unity subject was on the agenda. I hope the Premier defended the cause of Franco-Ontarians at the first ministers' conference and that he will every day that he stands to speak on unity. Francophones, aboriginal people and anglophones are all Ontarians.



**M. Gilles Bisson (Cochrane-Sud) :** Cette journée on a encore l'occasion de célébrer la contribution de tous les francophones en Ontario depuis l'acceptation de notre province au Canada. On sait que les francophones ont oeuvré beaucoup d'années et ont travaillé très fort avec tous les Ontariens pour bâtir une province dont on peut vraiment être fier.

Les contributions qu'on a vues aux secteurs d'affaires, des arts et de la culture à travers la province et celles des travailleurs impliqués dans le mouvement des syndicats démontrent vraiment une communauté, que nous, francophones en Ontario, avons notre place et que l'on travaille ensemble. On va tous dans la même direction parce qu'on croit que cette province en est réellement une dont on peut tous être fier, francophones, anglophones et autres.

Aussi, cette année on célèbre cette journée de manière un peu différente, en regardant ce qui s'est passé la dernière année avec ce gouvernement, et on commence vraiment à s'inquiéter, comme francophones en Ontario, que le gouvernement a besoin de mieux comprendre les besoins des francophones.

Je suis francophone, né ici en Ontario. Mon premier langage, c'est le français, et je comprends, avec mes compatriotes, qu'il est très important qu'un gouvernement s'engage à être certain que les francophones ont accès à un système d'éducation dans leur langue qui peut servir leurs besoins dans leur langue et dans leur culture. C'est important d'avoir les services nécessaires dans nos municipalités, qu'on peut avoir accès aux services de santé et à d'autres services.

Il y a beaucoup de francophones qui commencent à s'inquiéter de la direction prise par le gouvernement ontarien sur cette question. On demande au gouvernement de l'Ontario de se rengager et de se rappeler que les francophones font partie de la province. On est une partie très importante de 550 mille personnes dans la province et on a besoin d'avoir l'appui de notre gouvernement.

Aussi, on dit au gouvernement que l'on veut que l'engagement envers la Loi 8 soit claire, que ce soit une loi mise en place pour être sûr que tous les francophones de la province ont accès dans leurs régions, comme c'est indiqué dans la Loi 8, aux services en français. On demande au gouvernement de rester engagé avec cette loi parce qu'elle est très importante pour tous les francophones dans la province.

Le premier ministre a eu, la fin de semaine passée, la chance de rencontrer les premiers ministres des autres provinces et le premier ministre canadien. Je vous rappelle, M. Harris, que nous, Franco-Ontariens, pouvons jouer un rôle très important quand ça vient à la question de la constitution du Canada. Les francophones comprennent très bien l'importance de la francophonie, non seulement en Ontario. On comprend aussi, je pense, d'une manière un peu différente que les autres les sentiments au Québec. On peut travailler comme francophones à travers le pays, au Québec et hors Québec, pour bâtir les liens nécessaires pour démontrer au Québec et aux Québécois francophones qu'ici au Canada, on est mieux servis comme francophones au lieu d'être séparés de notre pays nous-mêmes.

Je demande au premier ministre et à son gouvernement de toujours se rappeler que les francophones de l'ACFO

et d'autres organismes francophones veulent jouer un rôle positif et demandent au gouvernement à toute occasion de s'engager, d'adopter une position consultative pour être capables de réaliser que les possibilités de ce qu'on peut faire ensemble sont tellement importantes.

Je souhaite à tous les francophones de la province aujourd'hui une bonne fête. Aujourd'hui on célèbre, et demain on va en avant et on continue l'ouvrage qu'on a fait comme Ontariens dans cette province.

**The Speaker:** Time for oral question period.

#### LEADER OF THE THIRD PARTY

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** Mr Speaker, I wonder perhaps before question period if we might have unanimous consent to say a few words. If you want the clock to run in question period, that's fine too. We probably don't have unanimous consent for that, but to say a few words, I would seek unanimous consent now.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

**Hon Mr Harris:** I'm pleased to lead off and take this opportunity to say a few words of congratulations on behalf of all members of the government caucus to the member for Rainy River. On behalf — I think I can speak of another club — of all of us who have sought the leadership of our respective parties, successful or otherwise, it's an experience unlike any other in the political process. It is not at any municipal level; it is very unique at the partisan level of provincial and federal politics.

I want to say to members of the House too that we're creations of this democratic process as it has evolved and been passed on to us, so it's moving, always, to watch a party select its leader at a convention. This exercise is really the cornerstone of our parliamentary democracy, so all of us who are interested in politics watched with interest over the weekend.

I think also I have some appreciation for how the member for Rainy River is feeling today. It was some six years ago that I found myself in a similar position. I know, as well, that the member once attended university on a hockey scholarship, almost turned professional. That's good training from time to time, being able to keep your elbows up when they need to be up. You're going to find yourself skating very fast from time to time, as well, and I think that will serve you in good stead.

I also want to reflect, if I might — and here I realize I'm not speaking on behalf of all members of the Legislature but those who reside close to and north of the French River.

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader):** Thanks.

**Hon Mr Harris:** I included you in "close to."

The choice has caused me to reflect on speculation. Whenever there is a member from northern Ontario — for a time, anyway, there are three leaders in this Legislature who can speak to that — there is always lots of speculation that it's a disadvantage to come from northern Ontario, that it's a disadvantage for the party to elect somebody from northern Ontario. I think the Leader of the Opposition will remember such speculation. I remember that speculation. While it hasn't been everybody's



first choice in how to resolve the issue, I think we would at least agree that in the last election we resolved that issue as far as regional electability goes.

1420

I want to also extend congratulations to the members for Dovercourt and Beaches-Woodbine and to the member for Welland-Thorold. I asked where he was because I wanted to say hello to him today. I figured he'd still be celebrating, but I'm told that contrary to that he's telling the people of Peterborough what a wonderful job the government's doing at this moment.

**Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside):** He's probably talking about you right at this very moment.

**Hon Mr Harris:** We've agreed he is talking about me anyway.

I know that on our side Dianne and I can speak to this — Dianne particularly, on one side of it — and many others of course understand that.

I also particularly want to acknowledge the service for the past few months of the member for Algoma. I think he's served the party and the Legislature well as interim leader of the party. I believe he'll always have very deserved respect from all members of the House in a continuing role.

I know what it's like to be leader of the third party. It's not without its frustrations when you come up with marvellous things that will save the world and the country or the province, or at least some aspect of it, and not quite as much attention is paid as ought to be. I know as well, though, that you can go from third to first, and while I'm going to wish you lots of success, not quite that much.

I believe that as leader of your party the role is one of equal importance to leaders of all parties and ought to be treated that way, and will be by me; I assure you of that. I can't speak for the media or the electorate, but I'm sure the media at least understand the volatility of voter wishes in the province of Ontario over the period of the last few elections.

We have a lot of things we can work together on in this Legislature. We may disagree from time to time on how we get to some of the goals — the concern about jobs, the economy, the north and the unique difficulties there on the challenges of those who are not participating as well or benefiting as well as others from all this great province has to offer — but I want to say to the member that I look forward to working with him on those goals.

I perhaps would say that in the nine years I and those of us who've been here that long have observed and worked with the member, in government, as opposition and as a minister of the crown, we've come to know you as a committed public servant, with integrity and dedication to this province. I believe you have that firm commitment and I wish you well on behalf of our colleagues, our entire caucus and our party, because you are also leader of a party with its unique responsibility as well. We wish you very well in your new responsibilities. Congratulations.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition):** This is one of those truly rare moments in the Legislature when I essentially want to echo the comments of the Premier of the province, because I do want to express, on

behalf of all the members of my caucus and indeed of our party, congratulations to the member for Rainy River on his victory this weekend and on his assuming the leadership of the New Democratic Party.

As the Premier has pointed out and as the media have commented over the course of the weekend, the victory for the member for Rainy River does create a historical moment in the province of Ontario since, for the current moment in any event, it is a time when all three leaders are from northern Ontario.

The Premier will appreciate the fact that I want to suggest that it's equally unique that two of the leaders of the parties in the Legislature are actually from northwestern Ontario, and I think that really is unique as we appreciate the sheer width of this province and the fact that until I had the opportunity to become leader of our party, there had not been a leader from northwestern Ontario in Ontario before. I think perhaps we're setting a trend, but in any event I think what has been clearly demonstrated, as the Premier has noted, is that candidates from even the most distant parts of the province can be fully accepted across Ontario.

I know that the member for Rainy River brings a knowledge and understanding of northwestern and northern Ontario issues, but I know too that he brings a very clear understanding that this is a very complex province with many different regions and different needs and that he will bring to that an understanding of those different needs and a genuine concern for all parts of the province, which is so essential to leadership.

We do wish you well in your new role, although my caucus members would want me to add, since we are still opposition parties, not too well in your new role. We will look forward to working with you as the moment seems appropriate, and there are other occasions when we will look forward to working against you when this political business seems to make that even more appropriate.

I also want to offer my congratulations, as the Premier has, not only to Mr Hampton but to his fellow candidates in this leadership campaign. I think that stepping forward as a leadership candidate for your party involves a tremendous personal commitment and that commitment is both to your party and it's also to the province of Ontario and to the political process. I would join as well in extending congratulations to the member for Algoma on his very strong, very vocal, very effective carrying out of the role of interim leader. I know that the other leadership candidates and the member for Algoma will be around for the fight for a long time and will continue to be formidable opponents in this place.

But I think we do recognize, as the Premier has said, that these aren't easy times in any party to be providing leadership, and the willingness of individuals to take on the challenge of leadership is a contribution to the democratic process and to this province that I think simply cannot be measured.

So we do offer our congratulations and our best wishes both to the new leader and to his colleagues, and we do that with genuine respect for the value of the work that we all do in this place and for our shared commitment to the future of this province.



**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** All members I think will understand why I have a particular interest in this event, and I'm particularly happy to congratulate the member for Rainy River on his success on the weekend because it now means that I have a little more time to live a normal existence around this place.

I do want to welcome the member for Rainy River from Peterborough, as well as our very successful convention on the weekend in Hamilton, and on behalf of all of our caucus members to indicate how pleased we were with the result and how he conducted himself and all of the candidates conducted themselves on the weekend and throughout the campaign for the leadership of our party. They all served us very well and I believe served the political process, the democratic process, very well in this province. So on behalf of all of my colleagues, I'd like to extend my congratulations not only to Howard but to the member for Dovercourt, the member for Beaches-Woodbine and the member for Welland-Thorold.

On the weekend as the voting progressed I was asked by a member of the gallery, who shall remain nameless, whether it was a good idea to have a northerner elected as leader, which I thought was a little odd asking me that question. Then I pointed out to that individual that I understood that the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition were both from northern Ontario, and the member of the media then went on to say: "Well, aren't you a little concerned at having a northern leader? He might not be able to really understand the problems of the rest of the province." I thought about the Leader of the Opposition and the Premier and thought, maybe he's right. Indeed, it was a silly question and I guess I gave a silly answer.

1430

It's important, though, for us in our party to recognize, as I'm sure the members of the Conservative Party and the members of the Liberal Party understand, that our leaders may be from northern Ontario and are proud of that heritage and that background and understand the problems of the north, but they also are elected leaders of this whole great province and are there to lead us in dealing with issues that matter to all Ontarians. We have every confidence, as the members of the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party have in their leaders, that Howard Hampton will serve us and the province of Ontario very, very well in that capacity.

I'd also, on a personal note, like to express on behalf of all of my colleagues congratulations to one other member who had a particular interest in this leadership campaign, and that is the member for Sudbury East, who conducted herself very well under significant pressure and really served all of us and helped Howard very well throughout the campaign.

I just want to say again on behalf of everyone in our party how pleased we are to be able to welcome Howard here this afternoon and we look forward to the fight in this place with all of our colleagues from the other two parties.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** I am indeed flattered by the remarks, but not that flattered. I appreciate all of the kind comments. I appreciate, from the

Premier, his drawing of the road map, how you go from third place to first place. I indeed appreciate that. I've studied your path well and we'll do our best to duplicate it very soon. I also want to thank the leader of the official opposition, whom I've known for a number of years now, and knew of her before she and I were both elected to this place at the same time. I say to Lyn McLeod that I guess this means we're competing once again for the Thunder Bay media. Maybe we can work a deal. You do it on Thursdays, I'll do it on Fridays, and we won't overlap too much.

I want to thank all members of the House for their kindness. I think many people don't realize outside of this place the work that goes into being elected, the work that goes into politics. Many people don't understand how we can fight hard here and on the hustings and still respect one another and like one another and admire one another. Too often, I guess, that gets lost in the shuffle, but I want you to know I appreciate the good wishes and the good feelings.

I want to congratulate and thank the member for Algoma, who has brought true meaning to the term "this Bud's for you." Many of you have experienced over the last four or five months what we have always known in our caucus: what a tremendously hard worker, what a dedicated individual he is, and how hard he fights.

I want to thank my colleagues the member for Dovercourt, who worked very hard, ran a splendid campaign; the member for Beaches-Woodbine, who ran an excellent campaign; and the member for Welland-Thorold, even though he's not always with us every day.

*Laughter.*

**Mr Hampton:** I think some of you have read more than one meaning into that statement.

I also want to thank the member for Sudbury East. The member for Sudbury East is an incredible adviser. She has very good political judgement, good political instincts. She's a good strategist. When I wrote my first speech for the convention she looked at it and said, "Do you want to talk to the delegates or do you want to teach philosophy?" I promptly put it away and wrote another speech, and I'm glad that I did.

I say to all of you that I expect we will continue to have some tough fights in this House. Please remember, none of it's personal. I only know one way to work at politics, and that is to work at it full speed ahead as hard as you can all the time. I never mean anything personal. I have the greatest of respect for everyone in this House, even people who hold diametrically opposite ideological views of the province. I know that all of you work hard. I know that we all mean well here. So take none of it personally if you find that over the next while I enjoy the fight too much. Thank you very much, Speaker. Thank you all.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### TUITION FEES

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition):** My first question is for the Minister of Education and Train-



ing. Minister, you and your government keep talking about how important it is to have a well-educated workforce, and on that point we would agree. The problem is that your rhetoric is right but your policies are all wrong and it is becoming only too clear that your policies are producing the wrong results.

According to figures that have been supplied by the Ontario university application centre, some 500 fewer high school students have applied from Ontario high schools to go to university this fall. Those young people who are not going to university are certainly not going to be going to a community college instead, because it is shocking to find that the number of applications from high school students who want to go to community college next year has plunged by 4,000.

There is one very simple reason for these decreases: a 20% increase in university tuition fees, a 15% increase in college tuition fees. Those increases have made post-secondary education virtually unattainable for thousands of Ontario high school students. Minister, will you acknowledge now that your tuition fee increases are preventing thousands of young people in this province from getting the education they need?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** No, I will not. There is no correlation between the tuition fees and the enrolments for next year. We are tracking enrolments very carefully, as we have looked in the past at enrolment figures, to see what will predict enrolments in universities and colleges across Ontario. I can assure the honourable member opposite that it's not in fact tuition fees, that there are other factors.

By the way, those numbers are very early and represent a very, very, very small percentage change in the enrolment over what has been predicted, and we'll see what happens as the summer rolls through.

**Mrs McLeod:** I have a feeling the minister is making up the other factors, that he is bluffing when he says there's no correlation between decreased numbers of students at a time of increased unemployment for young people who think that their options are going on to college and university and the fact that they have raised the tuition fees by 15% to 20% in this province. He seems to think that's just a coincidence. The bottom line is that this fall there are 4,500 fewer young people who are going to be going to college or university, 4,500 more young people who are saying they cannot afford to go to college or university because of this government's policies.

I find it ironical, not only that the minister suggests that there are other factors but that the policies of increased tuition fees that this minister and this government have brought in don't even fit with the campaign commitments this government made. When this government was campaigning, they said very clearly in writing in the campaign document that tuition fees would be allowed to rise slightly over a four-year period to 25% of the operating costs of a university or college education.

The fact is that prior to your tuition fee increases students were already paying 26% of the cost of their education. So they were already paying more than what your government in its campaign commitment said was

a fair share for students. Despite that, you went ahead and raised tuition, not by a slight amount, not over a four-year period, but in one fell swoop by 20% in universities and 15% in colleges.

Minister, I ask you, when did the change in policy occur? Are you now saying that 25% was not a fair share, that 33% is a fair share for students to pay? Is this your new government policy?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I would have thought that the honourable member opposite would know that the fair share — and I think it's important for the people of Ontario to recognize the fair share of the government, the fair share of institutions and the fair share of the students in paying for post-secondary education. That's a subject that has been in front of previous governments. This government is going to make it part of a discussion paper to talk fulsomely with various people across the province.

1440

I'm very surprised that the Leader of the Opposition has not mentioned the fact that this government will continue and in fact enhance the support of students in colleges and universities next year through increased funding to the Ontario student assistance program. We have \$100 million invested in a matching fund system, in a trust fund, for student aid. We've asked the colleges and universities to reinvest 10% of the increases in tuitions into student aid. There is a movement by this government to increase the assistance available to students, particularly those students in most financial need. I think it's an enviable track record.

**Mrs McLeod:** It is absolutely clear that you are out of touch with what young people are saying about what your tuition increases have done to their sense of accessibility to a college or a university education. You have continued to put up hurdles. You have reduced your support to colleges and universities. You have copped out of putting in place any substantial increase in student support to make up for your tuition increases by saying the universities can do some of it. Your foundation, which you like to boast about, will not see a penny actually returned to students for years and years, and in the meantime the only thing you've actually done for students is charge them, through a 1-900 number, for being able to get any information about student loans. You've just put in place one hurdle after another.

As the minister makes reference to previous governments, I think it's interesting to note that the last time students in this province saw tuition increases of this magnitude was under a previous Conservative government way back in 1980.

Since it is clear that young people are now paying more than what you and what your government said in your campaign document was a fair share for students — they're paying more than the 25% you said was a reasonable cost for students to bear; since you've already passed that, will you give students, young people in this province some assurance that you're not going to put more hurdles in place in the future, that you're not going to keep raising the bar? Will you declare today that your goal for students paying a share of their cost of education has been reached and that you are going to freeze tuition fees for students in this province for the next three years?



**Hon Mr Snobelen:** To the Leader of the Opposition, I can commit right now to the fact that this government will put the issue of what the fair share is of the province in a discussion paper. We will do that in the very near future. We believe that's an important thing that we should have a lot of input on from stakeholders, from the students, from the institutions, and listen to the taxpayers on this issue.

I also can assure the member opposite that we will invest in student aid, will invest more money in student aid next year than we did this year. We will improve our programs, will improve the help of co-op programs for college and university students. We've increased the amount of summer employment that's available for students across the province. We have implemented a number of measures that will help students.

I'm somewhat surprised by the whole context of the question. I would have thought that the Leader of the Opposition, who served as a Minister of Colleges and Universities, would know and would have experienced while she was involved in that portfolio the fact that enrolment trends in colleges and universities over the last few decades in Ontario have followed, in an opposite fashion, the general economy. Normally, when there is some fall-off in enrolments, a minor fall-off in enrolments, it's because there are more job opportunities out in the community.

So perhaps what we're beginning to hear is the echo of a recovery of the economy in Ontario. Maybe we're hearing the echo of some new job opportunities for young people in the province of Ontario. I think if the Leader of the Opposition listens very carefully, that's what she'll hear is going on in Ontario.

#### YOUNG OFFENDERS

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** I have a question again today for the Minister of Correctional Services and the Solicitor General. Minister, I'd like to go back to Elgin-Middlesex. What we do know is that on March 1 the alleged beatings took place. We know that on March 4 the child advocate called the Deputy Minister of Community and Social Services and your acting deputy minister of the day to inform them of the incident that took place and of her concerns about the safety of the young offenders still at the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre. During all this time, we do know that a mother of one of the young offenders frantically made over a dozen phone calls to your office to try to get the message through of her concerns for her son's safety.

But during the last couple of weeks of questioning in this House, you have continually denied knowledge of any of this for at least a three-month period. We now know, despite your claims, that your ministry prepared a briefing note to inform you of its concerns on March 7, and it specifically said that a mother feared for her son's safety. If you were on top of your job when you were reading this, I'm sure alarm bells would have gone off in your mind about the situation. I'm sure that with your political instinct you would have had a lot more questions about this particular incident and I'm sure would have followed up with your officials. Do you still expect us to

believe you didn't know about this incident until June of this year?

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** I think it was the first or second day the issue was raised in the House that I indicated we did have a record of a call from a mother which was referred to officials in the ministry of corrections, and the mother indicated she was satisfied with the response.

With respect to the note indicating a safety concern, I think that's valid, and I think the written word in terms of interpretation is a subjective matter, to say the least, and the opposition is putting one interpretation on it. Mr Speaker, I think if you put yourself in the place of a mother of a young offender who had been housed in a facility where a riot had just occurred causing significant damage, you would be concerned about the safety of that young offender in a riot situation.

If indeed there were any allegations with respect to maltreatment or physical assaults against young offenders, that would have been incorporated in an issue note. I interpret that issue note dramatically differently than the member opposite does. In fact, I think it's confirmation that the issues group and the minister's staff were not aware of those allegations whatsoever.

**Mr Ramsay:** It looks like your ministry was working on this, but it looks like you and your office dropped the ball in this whole incident. I suggest you take a long look in the mirror and maybe think you are the problem in this ministry and not those officials who were trying to get this situation corrected.

For weeks now, your statements have been incredible. We know the child advocate reported to your officials, your acting deputy minister, about this incident on March 4, and she also had recommended that these young people be moved for their own safety. Your briefing note, three days later, mentions that the mother of one of these young offenders had brought these concerns to your officials in your office.

We have two different sources now of concern coming into your ministry office, the child advocate, also the official guardian of children in this province, prescribing an official remedy: move those young people, transfer them to another facility. Why did it take you three months to react? Why was nothing done? Why did you do nothing?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I've indicated time and again that no one was happy with the young offenders being housed in an adult institution. I think that's understandable. They were there because a riot had occurred at Bluewater, causing extensive damage to that facility, and they had to be housed in a facility until appropriate quarters could be found. In fact, every effort was made by the child advocate and ministry staff to try to find alternative accommodation. Because of the strike situation and the lack of cooperation surrounding the labour dispute, we were unable to move those young offenders, the bulk of them, until the labour dispute was settled.

**Mr Ramsay:** I still believe something is rotten here. We have to get to the bottom of this. We know that the official guardian, the child guardian, the advocate, had brought these concerns to your office, and we now know



that the concerned mother's calls to you were taken by your staff and recorded in your briefing note.

We know that ministers in this place are not compelled to answer under oath. We have many officials involved here, each with their own story to tell, and you have told us your story here repeatedly. But the public needs to know the truth and the only way to get to the truth is to have all the people involved, including the minister, testify in this place under oath. When are you going to order a legislative inquiry so that the people of Ontario will know the truth and all of us can get to the bottom of this incident?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I don't hear a lot of concern from the public at large with respect to whether or not I'm telling the truth. I think I've indicated clearly I am telling the truth. The facts are out there. We've put them on the table over the past two and a half weeks that we've been discussing this issue. We have two investigations under way and they'll be made public in due course.

1450

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** New question, the leader of the third party.

*Applause.*

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** This will end some time or other.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** The member for Nickel Belt says this will end very soon.

My question is also to the Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services. A dark cloud surrounds you concerning the manner in which you have handled the scandal at the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre. You have shown the people of the province that you don't have a clue what is going on in your ministry. You have lurched from one investigation after another in your attempt to hide the fact that it is you, the minister, who is ultimately responsible for the alleged beatings and other abuse of young people in the care of your ministry at the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre. You have never explained why your acting deputy minister didn't inform you about the child advocate's concerns which were reported to your ministry as early as March 4, and there are many other unanswered questions.

The fact of the matter is, people don't believe you. You have claimed that you did not find out about the allegations of abuse to young people at Elgin-Middlesex until June 5, but recent press reports indicate that a contentious issue note dated March 7, prepared by your ministry, states:

"On March 5, 1996, a mother of a young offender who had been at Bluewater during this disturbance and subsequently transferred to Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre called the minister's office to express concern about her son's safety."

This note was prepared to keep you and your office informed of contentious issues, and I've got a copy of it. It's in bold print. It's not something you would easily gloss over. How do you explain what action you took when you and your staff read this note dated March 7, 1996?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I'm honoured to be on the receiving end of the first question from the new leader of

the third party. I congratulate him and I'm not going to take anything he says personally.

I indicated in my response to the member for Timiskaming my interpretation of that following a riot at a young offenders institution where there was serious damage done, and I think it's understandable that a parent would have concern about an offspring in circumstances like that. That's how I interpret it, and I think any objective observer would interpret it in the same way.

**Mr Hampton:** I want to ask the minister definitively: Did you read this note dated March 7 or a note similar to it?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I'm an honest person and I'll tell you that I can't recall whether I read it or not. I will indicate that we had hundreds of issues in the corrections ministry on a daily basis during the strike situation. I tried to cover as many as I could, and I had briefing sessions on a daily basis with the acting deputy minister.

The ministry of corrections at the best of times is a challenging ministry in terms of the incident reports, but I feel comfortable with the reports I had on the basis of the efforts I made to try and keep on top of the wide range of issues.

**Mr Hampton:** This becomes more incredible all the time. This is a briefing note, and it has written in bold print, bold print that no one would be able to ignore: "Major disturbance at BYC contained, successfully resolved. The office of child and family service advocacy also investigating." Then it goes through a number of details, all of which, if a minister is awake or his staff are alert at all, every one of these incidents would give cause to check out the circumstances, to make sure that nothing untoward was happening.

Then the final part: On March 5, 1996, a mother of a young offender calls to raise an alert and to express concern about her son's safety. It's absolutely incredible that the minister would then say, "Well, I don't recall."

I want to ask the minister about another document. This is a directive from the Ministry of the Solicitor General and Correctional Services, office of the assistant deputy minister, correctional services division, and it deals with how seriously issue notes are to be taken.

It says on this, "There is a clear, firm requirement by the offices of the minister and deputy minister that briefing papers should be prepared by 11 am to respond to media queries or questions in the Legislature when it is in session." Obviously a directive has come down in the corrections division of this minister's ministry saying: "These matters are to be treated very seriously. Notes are to be put forward very soon. Notes are to be made available for the minister's office."

How can the minister explain to the House? He issued this directive saying all of this was to be taken seriously. He gets a note like this, which is obviously very serious on its face — it has a number of serious details throughout it — and the minister can't even recall if he ever saw it. How does the minister add all of this up?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I indicated clearly the first or second day this issue was raised that the call was received. We received, as I indicated, hundreds of calls from a variety of people who were concerned about the corrections situation during the strike. It might have been



the spouse of a correctional officer or someone who had a spouse or family member as an inmate in the correctional system and who was concerned about their safety in an ongoing situation because of the staffing situation and the strike situation.

They were appropriately referred to the ministry of corrections for action. In this particular instance the ministry responded. The parent indicated her satisfaction with the response. I've indicated from the outset that we were aware of the call and that the ministry acted appropriately.

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** To the same minister: Minister, I have a copy of a memo dated June 4, 1996, the day before you allege that you heard about this incident in the EMDC. It's addressed to the western regional manager of correctional services from Mr Simpson, then the superintendent at Elgin-Middlesex. This memo is clearly Mr Simpson's response to the child advocate's report on Elgin-Middlesex. The first sentence in Mr Simpson's memo reads, "The above-captioned report" — the child advocate's report — "was discussed with senior management staff, health care staff and the institution chaplain."

I've already raised in this House with you a number of times the inappropriateness of managers who may be the subject of ongoing investigations having access to the child advocate's report and that this situation compromises the results of all the ongoing investigations. But what is most disturbing is the widening number of people, the number of ministry officials who apparently knew about these allegations of abuse, but you, Minister, say you were kept in the dark.

We know now that the following people at least were aware of this before you, Minister: the senior management staff at Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre, including Mr Simpson, Mr Huber, the health care staff, the institution chaplain; your acting deputy minister, Michael Jordan; the deputy minister, Elaine Todres; the assistant deputy minister, Neil McKerrell; Nandy Farkas of the ministry's internal investigations unit; and the minister's legislative assistant.

Minister, do you really expect us to believe that ministry officials were reading the child advocate's report, were meeting to discuss the report and were responding to that report well before June 5 when you say you were first told and you didn't have a clue that anything had happened?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I've indicated my position on this on numerous occasions. No matter what I say, the member opposite will never be convinced.

**Mrs Boyd:** We know that on March 4, Michael Jordan, the acting deputy minister, was made aware of allegations that young people had been beaten while in the care of your ministry. Minister, can you tell us the exact date that your deputy minister, Elaine Todres, upon returning to her position from a leave, was made aware of these allegations and what actions she took at that point?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I indicated — I hate to make mistakes on dates, but I think it was something like the first week in June that the deputy was — the report was

delivered to her office near the end of May. She was in London, out of the office, and I think she read the report on Tuesday of the following week and I was informed the following day.

**Mrs Boyd:** That's rather odd, Minister, since she was appearing in front of a legislative committee on April 15.

I believe the minister should be responding more directly to this and indicating to the public of this province very clearly exactly what the line of accountability is within his ministry. He should be responding. He is responsible, and he should be responding to the various widespread concerns about the way this matter was handled internally, not just by ministry officials but your own office, Minister, for which you are directly responsible. Your political staff knew, and if they didn't tell you, what kind of a minister are you?

**1500**

This is an attempt for you to try and hide this matter, to sweep it under the carpet, to keep employees who may have participated in the alleged events on the job, keep them caring for the same young people who had those allegations of abuse against those people. We're dealing with accountability. We're dealing here with responsibility of a minister, and as regrettable and as unfortunate as it sometimes is, when we're dealing with who is responsible for the lack of communication within his or her ministry, there's only one person who can accept that responsibility, and that one person is you, Minister.

In opposition your leader said, and I quote Hansard from July 16, 1992, "That lack of communication, if in fact that's what it was, is the minister's responsibility and it is the minister's responsibility to resign until we get a thorough, independent investigation of what happened with this coverup."

So, Minister, I ask you again: Do the honourable thing; resign.

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I don't interpret widespread concern as the folks across the aisle. In fact, I think most Ontario residents would recognize that we've done just the opposite from what the members in the opposition would like to suggest with respect to our openness, the fact that we've moved full speed ahead in terms of two investigations — an internal investigation and an OPP investigation. We've taken all of the appropriate actions, and I think the public of Ontario recognize that.

## SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** My question is to the Premier. Mr Premier, I want to bring your attention to page 10 of your sixth printing of the Common Sense Revolution, where it says in regard to seniors and the disabled: "We will establish a new and separate income supplement program, specifically for those unable to work. Funding for this program will be guaranteed at current levels. Aid for seniors and the disabled will not be cut."

Premier, in October you cut welfare rates across the province by 22%, when it meant at that time, and it does today, that a disabled individual with one dependant on welfare now receives \$957. Under the family benefits plan, where they should be, a disabled person with one



dependent receives \$1,424. So we're talking about a difference of \$487 for each individual.

As of the end of April 1996 there were still 13,326 seniors and disabled collecting welfare in this province for a significant reduction in their pay. That number, Mr Premier, is up 320 from February. So instead of moving individuals out of the welfare system — the seniors and disabled can't earn their money back — you've actually increased the number of seniors and disabled who are still dependent on welfare.

Can you explain to the House this blatant betrayal of the promise you made during the election? And what do you say to the over 13,000 seniors and disabled who believed you when you said you were not going to cut their benefits, but you have cut their benefits since October and have moved very few out of that system?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I don't have all the details in front of me. Certainly, our commitment — pre-election, during the election, in October, and today — is that not only is it not the intention of this government to cut benefits in our programs to seniors or the disabled, but in fact that's not our intention in the future as well. As you know, we've had to deal with probably the worst-administered and worst-run social welfare program in the history of North America, more money wasted, fewer resources actually getting, in percentage terms, to people who need the resources.

So the minister has faced up to that challenge of working at how we make programs more effective and more meaningful for those who are on social assistance. Now, if you're referring to those who are on GWA awaiting getting on the family benefits programs that have not been cut one cent to seniors or the disabled, we are concerned about the time it takes to move those people from general welfare — which is not intended, as you know, for seniors or the disabled but in fact is the FBA program — and of course the new program the minister is working on and will be announcing shortly. We too are concerned if there is a gap in a time frame moving from one program to the other. It's taken time to clean up this mess, but we're getting there.

**Mr Agostino:** The Premier's intentions are wonderful and the rhetoric is wonderful as to what's happened with the welfare system.

I want to talk specifically about your promise. On page 10 of the Common Sense Revolution, you stated, "Aid for seniors and the disabled will not be cut." I presume most seniors and disabled across Ontario would take that to mean their benefits would not be reduced when Mike Harris becomes Premier of Ontario and reduces welfare benefits across Ontario. I repeat as I said earlier that as of the end of April there were 13,326 seniors and disabled receiving substantially less money than you promised them during the election. It is clearly a promise you have broken. At this pace, at this speed that you're moving people, it would take you almost four years to move these individuals. People have suffered now for eight, nine, 10 months as a result of your cut.

Let me tell you that your government has saved, on the backs of the seniors and the disabled in Ontario since October, \$58 million. That is the amount of money you have taken out of the pockets of seniors and the disabled

by your broken commitment: \$58 million to fund your tax cut to the wealthy on the backs of the most vulnerable. Those individuals cannot work; they cannot earn it back. Your good intentions and saying you're trying and doing the best you can is simply not good enough, because many of those individuals are struggling simply to get by today as a result of your move. You did not understand, when you made the cut, the number of people who were going to be impacted.

Premier, I go back again. What guarantee can you give today to these over 13,000 individuals as to when you're going to bring in the protected category, and in what time line can these individuals expect to have their benefits fully restored? Please don't tell us about good intentions. Give us a date and a time line today.

**Hon Mr Harris:** Basically the same question, I suppose, but since you started with referencing page 10, let's start with page 10 of the Common Sense Revolution: We are committed "to move 170,000 of our citizens — seniors and the disabled — out of the 'welfare system' altogether." These are 170,000 who were on family benefits who we said should move on to —

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr Harris:** I'm sorry, but I'm quoting from the document. You may not like the Common Sense Revolution, but the majority of Ontarians do and they are quite encouraging us to implement it.

It says, "We will establish a new and separate income supplement program" — which we are in the process of doing, announced it will be forthcoming very shortly — "specifically for those unable to" find "work," who are the people in this category. "Funding for this program will be guaranteed at current levels." In fact, it will be. Aid for seniors and the disabled, for all those 170,000, has not been cut at all.

What you I believe are referring to is those who apply for welfare in the category of disabled or senior and the time it takes to get to the general welfare, run by the municipalities, to our provincial program. This has been a challenge and a problem since the history of the two systems, one of the reasons we'd like to see it better coordinated and better run.

On the provincial FBA program, not a single penny has been cut for any of those seniors or disabled people, and in fact our challenge is to make sure that we get, as per our commitment to the letter, actually, precisely, all the t's crossed and the i's dotted. We have lived up 100% to the commitment. But far beyond that, we are coming forward with a program far more meaningful for those who are in that category, to treat them with dignity, to take them off welfare where they never belonged before, something that neither you nor our predecessor, following you, had the courage to do.

1510

#### GOVERNMENT POLICY

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is for the Premier. Today I joined thousands of Ontarians in Peterborough where people who have been hurt by your government's policies are marching in protest. I met seniors who are being hit by this government's new user



fees on drugs. I met a lot of people who have lost their jobs as a result of your government's cuts. I met youths who are having trouble finding jobs against a backdrop of your government's cuts to public sector jobs and services. I met many men and women with disabilities who joined the march to speak out against the Conservative attack on the disabled. There were women's groups and environmentalists angry about the way this government is gutting services and regulations, and there were workers and their unions.

People in Peterborough wanted to know: When is the Premier going to stop favouring his rich friends at the expense of the working people in Ontario? When is the Premier going to realize how destructive his cuts are and how destructive it is to divide the province into haves and have-nots, people who have and people who have less? When is the Premier going to stop doing that?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** The leader of the New Democratic Party will know that I will fundamentally disagree with what he believes is the result of our policies that are giving life and hope and opportunity to so many Ontarians where it wasn't there before.

Specifically, when you talk about the haves and the have-nots, never have we seen more growth in that than during the socialist policies of his regime or the government before it. The more you threw money at it, the bigger the problem got.

You talk about seniors' concerns. I want to say to you very directly, and I'm happy to say, seniors overwhelmingly are supportive of the health care policies of the minister, of the new drug care policies. The mail into my office and the phone calls into our office are overwhelmingly in support of what we are doing. Seniors overwhelmingly — the number one group, in fact, in the province of Ontario — are saying, "Finally, a government with the courage to do what has to be done and not pass on a legacy to our children." So I fundamentally disagree.

Can you find a senior to disagree? Sure. Can you find a union member to disagree? Yes. I understand that and I understand not everybody agrees with our policies, but let me say very directly to you and to those who disagree with our policies that our goal and our policies are not to deal with those who can fend for themselves or the wealthy in society. They can take care of themselves. Our goal is to have many more people who raise up into the class of working class and into the class of middle class and raise the wealth of the average hardworking Ontario family. That's what you failed to do — in fact, you destroyed it — and that is exactly what we are doing.

**Mr Hampton:** The Premier repeats his same mantra every time he's asked this question. The reality is that all kinds of people have lost their jobs and there are literally hundreds of people in Peterborough who have lost their jobs in the last year. There are other people who are in more desperate circumstances now than they have been in at any other time in their life. There are all kinds of people who have lost valuable education and health care services so that this Premier could give a tax break to the wealthiest people of this province.

The reality is that this Premier is dividing Ontario's society in half. He is giving more benefits, he is giving more tax breaks, he is giving more opportunities to

people who are already well off, and he is taking opportunities away, he is taking services away, he is taking resources away from the poorest people in the province.

I say to the Premier again: When are you going to stop dividing Ontario into two halves? When are you going to stop taking from the poorest people in this province and giving to the wealthiest people in this province?

**Hon Mr Harris:** All the statistics prove the opposite of what you've talked about. Have some people lost jobs? Yes, but more have found jobs than have lost them: 24,000 new jobs the first five months of 1996. An Angus Reid survey: confidence in the provincial economy the highest level in two years. The same survey shows a growing feeling in companies that Ontario is the best province in the country to invest. People who had given up looking for work are now back out there looking for work. Retail sales in Ontario are up 3.3% in the first quarter of this year. Ontario's GDP, since we've taken office, is up 3.1%, well ahead of all of the rest of the provinces. Credit rating: confirmed upgraded in the short term by a couple of agencies.

I want to say that I thought when I welcomed the new leader today that he and I would be working together. In fact, we are working together to do something, because I read the headline in the Toronto Star and it says, "Hampton Vows to Bury NDP Past." So do we.

#### MUNICIPAL SERVICE DELIVERY AWARD

**Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent):** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Minister, you recently announced the recipients of the Ontario local government innovative public service delivery awards, one of which, I'm proud to say, was to the city of Chatham, located in my riding of Chatham-Kent. Could the minister please tell the House a bit more about the background of these awards?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I would like to thank my colleague the member for Chatham-Kent for the question. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the great city of Chatham and the other recipients of this award for finding creative ways of delivering services more efficiently and more effectively.

This annual award began in 1993 as a way of recognizing local governments for innovative approaches to financing and building infrastructure. It is jointly sponsored by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Ministry of Education and Training, the Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships, the Municipal Finance Officers Association, the Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario and the Ontario Association of School Business Officials.

The program was expanded in 1996 to cover operating as well as capital innovations involving public-private partnerships. To be eligible, projects must demonstrate tangible benefits such as operating and/or capital cost savings, efficiencies and service improvements and coordination of resources and objectives among governments and private partners.

**Mr Carroll:** It is obviously good news that municipalities are so actively participating with the private sector



in finding ways to cut costs while improving services. Could the minister also tell the House which other municipalities were honoured with an award in finding ways to save money for Ontario taxpayers?

**Hon Mr Leach:** Again I thank my colleague for the question, because I would be happy to share with this House the other municipalities which were recognized for working to find better, more efficient ways of delivering services to their constituents.

The recipients included the city of Thunder Bay, the town of Ingersoll, the city of Guelph, the town of Smiths Falls and the Frontenac County Board of Education.

I should mention that this is the first year in which a board of education has been recognized for this award. I'm pleased that so many Ontario municipalities and school boards are finding new, creative and less expensive ways of delivering their services.

### CRIME PREVENTION

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** I have a question for the Solicitor General. Minister, there is a growing concern and frustration in Metro Toronto as a result of the growth of crimes like shoplifting, breaking and entering and vandalism. It seems that the courts are unable to deal with the problems. On top of that, there are 1,000 fewer police officers in Metropolitan Toronto.

In New York City, for example, the crime rates have plunged by 30% because the city, the state and the courts are now taking all crimes, big and small, seriously. In New York, they clamped down on street prostitution, graffiti vandals, shoplifters and unlicensed pedlars in an effort to restore a sense of comfort and safety on the streets of New York.

1520

Minister, it seems that you're going in the opposite direction here in Ontario, with fewer police officers and essentially looking the other way at small crimes like break-and-enter and vandalism. Will you not reverse this trend your government is now on?

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** The member raises a good point with respect to the experience New York City has had in the last two to three years. I've been following it closely, and on the face of it it certainly looks like there has been a significant turnaround in terms of the level of crime in New York City. I'm hoping to meet with the commissioner of police from New York City later on this summer to discuss the program they brought forward in that city and see how we can bring it into the process in terms of the policing review now under way in Ontario. The member is aware that we held a policing summit three weeks ago in Toronto, with the key players from various interests in policing right across Ontario moving towards a new Police Services Act some time later this year. We're addressing the concerns you raise here today. I'm certainly very much interested in the New York experience and I think we can learn from it.

**Mr Colle:** As you know, your partner the Attorney General is embarking on a plan to de-emphasize some of the criminal acts that take place. Break-and-enters and vandalism are going to be put in a different category.

How is this going to reassure the people of Toronto who have their stores broken into regularly and their cars vandalized and property vandalized? How are you going to reassure them? On top of that, you've got 1,000 fewer police officers on the street. You've got an Attorney General who's going to look the other way on some crimes and you've got fewer police officers. Right now, in some divisions in Toronto there are only six uniformed officers on the night shift. How are the people of Toronto ever going to have any faith that your government is actually going to take these so-called small crimes seriously?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** The member is aware that the Metro police services are undergoing a recruitment drive at the moment; they're hiring somewhere in the neighbourhood of 300 new officers. We are very much committed to front-line policing; that's part of this whole exercise in terms of a review of policing to ensure we can have police officers on the front lines doing real policing work. We hope this process is going to move in that direction to take people away from duties I and most Ontarians would not consider front-line, and put them out there doing meaningful work. At the same time, I think there is a role for diversion programs and alternative dispute mechanisms. We just have to be certain, as we go through this process, that they are indeed appropriate — not encouraging further acts of crime — and enhancing public safety.

### YOUNG OFFENDERS

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** My question is also to the Solicitor General. A number of times now we've asked you why the police were not called in to investigate the allegations that young people within the care of your ministry were beaten and mistreated at Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre, and you've repeatedly said that the ministry protocol was followed because the OPP were investigating.

But OPP Inspector Jim Gordon has clarified that the force didn't have jurisdiction in Elgin-Middlesex, something I reminded you of some time ago. He said: "At the time of our investigation, we were interviewing [the teenaged] inmates as suspects, not victims. It's an entirely different approach." They were only investigating the riot at Bluewater.

You've tried to make this House and the public believe that the OPP were investigating both the Bluewater riot and the allegations of assault at Elgin-Middlesex, as per your ministry protocol, but it's now evident that the protocol was not followed at all. I ask you again, why were the London police, who do have jurisdiction, not called in to investigate the allegations of assault until May 31?

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** As I've indicated to the honourable member with respect to the OPP investigation, I don't think there's any question they were called in there initially to look at the causes of the riot and to perhaps assess blame, and that has resulted in a number of charges being laid.



My conclusion with respect to that investigation, if you base it on comparable investigations where any police officer comes across the question of criminal activity, is that it's incumbent upon that officer or officers to pursue those matters. I've read the officer's comments with interest and we've asked for some elaboration on them.

**Mrs Boyd:** Minister, this whole thing becomes more peculiar and more unbelievable every time you stand up.

We've asked this question on numerous occasions, and you keep on defending this by saying the OPP were there. To use your own words, you said in this House on June 11: "...there was an OPP investigation. There are certainly questions that can arise now about that particular investigation, but to suggest that the procedure wasn't followed with respect to an investigation denies the fact that there was an investigation under way at the point...."

You can't hide behind that OPP investigation any longer. After all, you are the Solicitor General and you are responsible for the OPP. If they didn't do their job properly, you're still responsible. You can't hide from this. You're responsible as corrections minister for what happens to young people in the care of your ministry and you're responsible as Solicitor General for the lack of competence in the police investigation if these issues were not, as you suggest they should have been, looked into.

Your ministry officials didn't follow the ministry protocol to call the police regarding the allegations. Why were the London police not called in by at least someone down the line? Why didn't they check with the OPP to see whether they were investigating those allegations?

You simply are not in control of either side of your ministry, and every time we raise this issue you say something else that makes it clear. When are you going to resign?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I think I've responded adequately to that question on numerous occasions.

### VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

**Mr Jim Brown (Scarborough West):** My question is to the Minister of Education and Training. Residents, teachers and board officials in my riding have expressed concern over the rise of gang activity in local schools. There have been a number of violent incidents involving gang members both in my riding and across Metro Toronto over the last several weeks. Minister, what steps are you encouraging to counter this growing trend in gang violence?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** I thank the member for Scarborough West for his excellent question. There have been some recent incidents of gang-related violence both in schools and outside schools across Ontario. This seems to be a trend that has been picked up from other jurisdictions in North America.

There are some very serious responses by various boards to this problem. As a matter of fact, the North York Board of Education recently received a report on ways to defuse gang violence in our schools. The report looked at ways of building on some programs that are already working in our schools and building on efforts of

the various programs in our school system to combat violence of any type — racism violence, gang violence — and there are, as I'm sure you're aware, many programs that have been adopted in Ontario over the last few years to challenge this.

The number one ingredient in all these programs, and the report bears this out, is a high level of student involvement; that seems to be the core of the programs that help to prevent violence with young people.

I am confident, having talked to a great number of students, school boards and teachers across the province, that steps are being taken to curb violence and gang violence and that the safety of our young people, the number one responsibility of all people in our school system, is being addressed seriously.

**Mr Jim Brown:** A number of teachers and supervisory officers report that students are often hesitant to report criminal activities at school. This code of silence leads to situations where vicious assaults on students are going unreported. Minister, what steps are you taking to encourage students to act responsibly when faced with violence at school?

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I recently attended a conference of Student Crime Stoppers at York University. Over the last month or so I had a chance to drop in and see the work that's being done with students, with the cooperation of students and by our law enforcement people who are directly involved in the schools and I can assure the honourable member that programs like Student Crime Stoppers go a long way to encourage young people to report crimes and incidents of violence and racism to the authorities and work hand in hand with the authorities to make sure those school environments are safe for everyone.

This is an excellent program, and I'm pleased to report that all the people in the school system, including law enforcement members who are in the school system on a regular basis, are participating with students to make reporting crimes a safe activity.

1530

### PUBLIC SECTOR RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** My question is for the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations and relates to this government's plans to deregulate or self-regulate some important aspects of consumer protection having to do with everything from amusement parks to the upholstery people sit on, to elevating devices, boiler and pressure vessels, and so on. I want to ask the minister to tell the House today what his ministry seems to be hiding, which is the exact benchmark against which these new private entities will be measured. We have been told by the ministry that we can't get numbers on employees, convictions or, in general, the activity that's been taking place within the government. Yet this government proposes to take these private.

I wonder if the minister today would please bring to this House the activities against which this deregulation will be measured, including the amount of revenue and cost of this activity that he proposes to give to the private sector?



**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations):** As the member well knows, this afternoon a committee of this Legislature will be dealing with Bill 54, which is the very topic of this question. At that particular meeting there will be, along with me and my parliamentary assistant, many officials from my ministry who will be able to answer specific questions he or any other member of this House might have.

I want to emphasize, however, that there will be no deregulation contained in this bill or in this effort. It is a question of allowing other people to manage their own affairs with regard to their professions, as we have in 24 health-related professions in this province, as we have with the lawyers of this province, as we have with the engineers of this province, as we have with the accountants of this province. It's really an extension of a situation which is already there.

With regard to the safety organization to which he is referring, he will be able to get those specific answers when my officials are there at the committee this afternoon, if he should like to have them.

**Mr Kennedy:** I want to express my disappointment on behalf of the consumers in this province, because some suspicion is starting to stir about whether this government really has their interests at heart. That would be available to anyone in terms of the information that we do have in the public accounts, which suggests that the activities which are about to be given away to self-regulation cost the ministry approximately between \$18 million and \$20 million and yet bring to the government and the ministry approximately \$27.8 million in revenue, for a giveaway of at least \$7 million to \$9 million.

I would ask you again, would you please tell us in this House why the government proposes to give away \$7 million to \$9 million of government revenue, and rather than doing better for less, we're going to get instead less for more? We're going to have less money for consumer protection. I would implore you to give an answer in front of this House today.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** The member is correct in one way: This particular initiative by the government is not fiscally driven; it is not driven by the government wanting to make or not make money with regard to these activities which the government presently performs. I believe the member's calculations are probably not accurate and are out by a considerable amount. In my estimate, it will be about a wash in terms of the revenue and the cost to government. That has been looked at by my government and will be embodied in some of the agreements we have with these particular organizations. We're doing this because we think it's better. We're not doing this because we expect to save or lose money. The amount of money on either side of the equation will be negligible with regard to the more important aspect of ensuring that consumers are better protected under the new scheme than they were under the old.

#### RENT REGULATION

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. I will

not have an opportunity to get a supplementary, so I'll try to do this in the one part. We know that tomorrow you're going to come to this Legislature, you're going to be delivering your discussion paper on what you call your tenant protection legislation or package. There are plenty of rumours within the tenant community of the province of Ontario that this package will contain many measures that will be pro-landlord and anti-tenant.

We clearly know that your government is on the side of big business, you're on the side of money. You've chosen sides quite clearly. You've said in choosing sides that you're going to protect landlords and you're going to forget tenants. We understand that part of the package, contained in it, is the whole question of vacancy decontrol. You intend in this package to say that if a tenant leaves and a landlord wants to raise his or her rent, you will allow the landlord to do so and that apartment unit will no longer be covered under rent control. You know as well as I that if you move to that kind of system, what you're doing is giving landlords a huge club. You will allow landlords to intimidate tenants, to get them out in order to be able to raise the rent.

I want you to put tenants at ease today, Minister. I would like you to assure tenants that your package will be reflected on and you will not come forward with vacancy decontrol. Can you tell us if that is your intention?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** What I can tell the member for Cochrane South is that we will be bringing a package forward for consultation that will make both landlords and tenants happy.

What we know is that the system we have at the present time doesn't work. It doesn't work for landlords; it doesn't work for tenants. We have to fix it; we intend to fix it. We intend to give everybody an opportunity to have input into that process and we'll be bringing it forward within a matter of hours.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** We are dealing with two deferred votes from previous days. Call in the members. It will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1537 to 1542.*

#### AGGREGATE AND PETROLEUM RESOURCES STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1996

#### LOI DE 1996 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LES RESSOURCES EN AGRÉGATS ET LES RICHESSES PÉTROLIÈRES

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 52, An Act to promote resource development, conservation and environmental protection through the streamlining of regulatory processes and the enhancement of compliance measures in the Aggregate and Petroleum Industries / Projet de loi 52, Loi visant à promouvoir la mise en valeur des ressources, la conservation ainsi que la protection de l'environnement en simplifiant les processus de réglementation et en renforçant les mesures de conformité dans l'industrie pétrolière et l'industrie des agrégats.



**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Will the members take their seats, please. We're dealing with second reading of Bill 52 standing in the name of Mr Hodgson. All those in favour will please rise one at a time until your name is recognized.

**Ayes**

Baird, John R.	Hastings, John	Parker, John L.
Barrett, Toby	Hodgson, Chris	Pettit, Trevor
Bassett, Isabel	Hudak, Tim	Preston, Peter
Beaubien, Marcel	Jackson, Cameron	Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Boushy, Dave	Johns, Helen	Ross, Lillian
Brown, Jim	Johnson, Bert	Runciman, Bob
Carr, Gary	Johnson, David	Sampson, Rob
Carroll, Jack	Johnson, Ron	Saunderson, William
Chudleigh, Ted	Jordan, Leo	Shea, Derwyn
Clement, Tony	Kells, Morley	Sheehan, Frank
Cunningham, Dianne	Klees, Frank	Skarica, Toni
Danford, Harry	Leach, Al	Smith, Bruce
Doyle, Ed	Leadston, Gary L.	Snobelen, John
Ecker, Janet	Marland, Margaret	Spina, Joseph
Elliott, Brenda	Martiniuk, Gerry	Sterling, Norman W.
Eves, Ernie L.	Maves, Bart	Stockwell, Chris
Fisher, Barbara	Munro, Julia	Tascona, Joseph N.
Flaherty, Jim	Murdoch, Bill	Tilson, David
Ford, Douglas B.	Mushinski, Marilyn	Turnbull, David
Fox, Gary	Newman, Dan	Villeneuve, Noble
Galt, Doug	North, Peter	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Gilchrist, Steve	O'Toole, John	Wilson, Jim
Grimmett, Bill	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Wood, Bob
Hardeman, Ernie	Palladini, Al	

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one at a time until your name is called.

**Nays**

Agostino, Dominic	Grandmaître, Bernard	McLeod, Lyn
Bisson, Gilles	Gravelle, Michael	Morin, Gilles E.
Boyd, Marion	Hampton, Howard	Patten, Richard
Bradley, James J.	Kennedy, Gerard	Phillips, Gerry
Brown, Michael A.	Kormos, Peter	Pouliot, Gilles
Caplan, Elinor	Kwinter, Monte	Ramsay, David
Churley, Marilyn	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sergio, Mario
Colle, Mike	Lankin, Frances	Silipo, Tony
Cooke, David S.	Laughren, Floyd	Wildman, Bud
Cordiano, Joseph	Marchese, Rosario	Wood, Len
Crozier, Bruce	Martel, Shelley	
Curling, Alvin	Martin, Tony	

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 71, the nays are 34.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader):** Resources committee.

**The Speaker:** The resources committee? Agreed? Agreed.

## TAX CUT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH ACT, 1996 LOI DE 1996 SUR LA RÉDUCTION D'IMPÔTS ET LA CROISSANCE ÉCONOMIQUE

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 47, An Act to cut taxes, to stimulate economic growth and to implement other measures contained in the 1996 Budget / Projet de loi 47, Loi visant à réduire les impôts, à stimuler la croissance économique et à mettre en oeuvre d'autres mesures mentionnées dans le budget de 1996.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Now we're dealing with second reading of Bill 47, standing in the name of Mr Eves. The same vote?

**Interjections.**

**The Speaker:** A five-minute bell. Call in the members.

*The division bells rang from 1546 to 1551.*

**The Speaker:** All members take their seats. We are dealing with second reading of Bill 47, standing in the name of Mr Eves. Will the members rise until their name is called, one at a time.

**Ayes**

Baird, John R.	Hastings, John	Parker, John L.
Barrett, Toby	Hodgson, Chris	Pettit, Trevor
Bassett, Isabel	Hudak, Tim	Preston, Peter
Beaubien, Marcel	Jackson, Cameron	Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Boushy, Dave	Johns, Helen	Runciman, Bob
Brown, Jim	Johnson, Bert	Sampson, Rob
Carr, Gary	Johnson, David	Saunderson, William
Carroll, Jack	Johnson, Ron	Shea, Derwyn
Chudleigh, Ted	Jordan, Leo	Sheehan, Frank
Clement, Tony	Kells, Morley	Skarica, Toni
Cunningham, Dianne	Klees, Frank	Smith, Bruce
Danford, Harry	Leach, Al	Snobelen, John
Doyle, Ed	Leadston, Gary L.	Spina, Joseph
Ecker, Janet	Marland, Margaret	Sterling, Norman W.
Elliott, Brenda	Martiniuk, Gerry	Stockwell, Chris
Eves, Ernie L.	Maves, Bart	Tascona, Joseph N.
Fisher, Barbara	Munro, Julia	Tilson, David
Flaherty, Jim	Murdoch, Bill	Turnbull, David
Ford, Douglas B.	Mushinski, Marilyn	Villeneuve, Noble
Fox, Gary	Newman, Dan	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Galt, Doug	North, Peter	Wilson, Jim
Gilchrist, Steve	O'Toole, John	Wood, Bob
Grimmett, Bill	Ouellette, Jerry J.	
Hardeman, Ernie	Palladini, Al	

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one at a time.

**Nays**

Agostino, Dominic	Grandmaître, Bernard	McLeod, Lyn
Bisson, Gilles	Gravelle, Michael	Morin, Gilles E.
Boyd, Marion	Hampton, Howard	Patten, Richard
Bradley, James J.	Kennedy, Gerard	Phillips, Gerry
Brown, Michael A.	Kormos, Peter	Pouliot, Gilles
Caplan, Elinor	Kwinter, Monte	Ramsay, David
Churley, Marilyn	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sergio, Mario
Colle, Mike	Lankin, Frances	Silipo, Tony
Cooke, David S.	Laughren, Floyd	Wildman, Bud
Cordiano, Joseph	Marchese, Rosario	Wood, Len
Crozier, Bruce	Martel, Shelley	
Curling, Alvin	Martin, Tony	



**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 70, the nays are 34.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader):** Committee of the whole House.

**The Speaker:** Committee of the whole? Agreed.

## PETITIONS

### DRIVER EXAMINATION CENTRE

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario government has a duty and responsibility to provide driver exam centres across the province;

"Whereas the Ministry of Transportation has decided to close the Leamington driver exam centre despite the fact that:

"(1) The Leamington centre is the only exam office between Windsor and Chatham thus forcing persons and local driver training schools to travel over 50 kilometres in order to obtain a driver exam;

"(2) The Leamington Centre serves a population of over 35,000;

"(3) There already exists a six-month waiting list for driver exams in Leamington; and

"(4) The MTO did not consult with the local community;

"Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, demand that the MTO explore every option of retaining driver examinations in the Leamington area, and that the MTO postpone the closing of the present DEC site until a new solution is formulated."

I affix my signature in support of this.

### CHILD ABUSE

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** I have a petition signed by over 700 people within the Metro area and endorsed by Anna-Marie Goralczyk, who is here today in the gallery to hear me read this petition. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it asks people to sign the petition on child abuse and the CAS. It says:

"Family court should hear applications of child in need of protection from the CAS. CAS should report to police all abuses in foster care. The public should be informed to report child abuse to the police, who would be assisted by CAS in appropriate situation. CASs should be safe homes answerable to the police, and not investigating crime, avoiding abuse-handling internally.

"Parents shouldn't be denied equal evaluation of evidence or forced to communicate with CAS in ways that remove that equality, in case the CAS's mandate and protocol shift from the best interests of the child to themselves due to abuses in care.

"The police should react when CASs obstruct justice, tamper with evidence, use coercion and be in control of the register of abuse. A safe home should be organized for children who've been abused in care; access and

therapy prohibited to CAS. When short of police, enlargements should be made to youth bureaus instead of handing the investigations to CAS, to avoid CAS investigating themselves.

"Official guardians, government child lawyers should present evidence from the child only and not rely on submissions of the CAS. Children should be free to choose an attorney, and not forced counsel by official guardians against his or her will.

"It should be illegal for CAS to threaten permanent separation because a parent doesn't want to sign for extended care when a period of two years results in the parent losing custody regardless of the facts. A group able to act should oversee that CASs don't put parents in humanly legally impossible positions.

"CASs shouldn't force instruction on child therapists. Family court judges shouldn't rely on therapy reports as mini-judgements and should consider evidence of persons other than the CAS network.

"The police should recognize webs of victims and organizations that may tend to protect their own. A recent decision by the Superintendent Court of Canada has favoured freedom of the press. General media and publication of names of dangerous persons should be practised including CAS employees.

"CASs should be report statistics of abuse in foster care and percentages of charges and convictions.

"The CAS should give clear, justifiable reasons in writing to parents for enforcing permanent family separation — silence, inaction not being an option.

"CASs should assist families who suffer aftermath sexual abuse, regardless if charges are laid."

Thank you, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity.

### CONDOMINIUM LEGISLATION

**Mr John L. Parker (York East):** I have a petition on behalf of another member, to the Parliament of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the present Condominium Act of Ontario does not give the condominium corporations the legal right to limit the number of people who occupy each unit in the complex, thus causing overcrowding situations in many buildings; and

"Whereas this overcrowding creates excessive demands on services and facilities of the condominiums, leading to tensions, violence, fire and health problems, increased maintenance expenses, and depreciation of values;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"We strongly recommend that the Condominium Act of Ontario be amended to give the condominium corporations, through their own rules and regulations, the legal right to limit the number of persons per unit and a 'right of entry' to ensure adherence to the rules;

"The right of condominium owners and taxpayers must be considered and supported in order to alleviate this inequitable situation."

1600

### NON-PROFIT HOUSING COOPERATIVE

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** My petition reads as follows:



"Whereas the government of Ontario has clearly indicated that it 'wants to get out of the housing business'; and

"Whereas the Ontario government is reviewing the legal contracts and budgets of every co-op housing project in the province; and

"Whereas the Ontario government has announced plans to make huge cuts to co-op and non-profit housing funding; and

"Whereas the Ontario government wants to replace affordable housing with subsidies to private landlords; and

"Whereas co-op housing is a proven success in providing affordable homes owned and managed by the people who live in them; and

"Whereas the actions of the Ontario government threaten to destroy stable, well-maintained communities which have been built over the last quarter of a century and the investment all Ontarians have made in this type of affordable social housing;

"We, the undersigned, request that the Ontario government sit down with the co-op housing sector to negotiate a deal which will ensure the long-term financial viability of housing co-ops and the continuance of rent-geared-to-income assistance upon which thousands of co-op members depend and which will promote greater responsibility for administration by the co-op housing sector and less interference by the government in day-to-day operations of housing co-ops."

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** I have a petition from a number of concerned taxpayers. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario government has clearly indicated that it 'wants to get out of the housing business'; and

"Whereas the Ontario government is reviewing the legal contracts and budgets of every co-op housing project in the province; and

"Whereas the Ontario government has announced plans to make huge cuts to co-op and non-profit housing funding; and

"Whereas the Ontario government wants to replace affordable housing with subsidies to private landlords; and

"Whereas co-op housing is a proven success in providing affordable homes owned and managed by the people who live in them; and

"Whereas the actions of the Ontario government threaten to destroy stable, well-maintained communities which have been built over the last quarter of a century and the investment all Ontarians have made in this type of affordable social housing;

"We, the undersigned, request that the Ontario government sit down with the co-op housing sector to negotiate a deal which will ensure the long-term financial viability of housing co-ops and the continuance of rent-geared-to-income assistance upon which thousands of co-op members depend and which will promote greater responsibility for administration by the co-op housing sector and less interference by the government in the day-to-day operations of housing co-ops."

I affix my signature to this petition.

## BEAR HUNTING

**Mr David Turnbull (York Mills):** I have a petition that reads:

"Whereas bears are hunted in the spring after they have come out of hibernation; and

"Whereas about 30% of the bears killed in the spring are female, some with cubs; and

"Whereas 80% of the orphaned cubs do not survive the first year; and

"Whereas 95.3% of the bears killed by non-resident hunters and 54% killed by resident hunters are killed over bait; and

"Whereas Ontario still allows the limited use of dogs in bear hunting; and

"Whereas bears are the only mammals hunted in the spring; and

"Whereas bears are the only mammals that are hunted over bait; and

"Whereas there are only six states in the United States which still allow a spring hunt;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to amend the Game and Fish Act to prohibit the hunting of bears in spring and to prohibit the use of baiting and dogs in all bear-hunting activities."

I too affix my signature to this.

## ONTARIO HYDRO

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** I have a petition sent to me by Agnes Skinner, a constituent of mine who is very concerned about the potential privatization of Ontario Hydro and what that might mean in terms of higher rates. The petition reads:

"To the Legislature of Ontario:

"Whereas the matter of selling Ontario Hydro is likely to come before the Legislature in the near future; and

"Whereas we, the undersigned residents of Ontario, who have through the payment of electricity rates paid for Ontario Hydro, are concerned about privatization of Ontario Hydro leading to higher rates, lower reliability and compromised nuclear safety;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"Please preserve the public ownership of Ontario Hydro and refuse to sell this important public asset."

I'm pleased to sign my name to the petition.

## EDUCATION FINANCING

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** I'm pleased to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"We, the undersigned parents and taxpayers of Essex Street public school, wish to inform the Honourable John Snobelen, Minister of Education, that we are in strong opposition to any forced or voluntary transfer of educational tax dollars to the province.

"We are aware that Metro Toronto has already received a budget cut of over \$75 million with a loss of 300 teachers. We are concerned that any transfer of tax dollars will cause further cuts, which will dramatically affect the classroom.



"In addition, we would like to inform the Minister of Education that we strongly support junior kindergarten programs because they have a positive influence on children in the community.

"We also view adult education as essential to the wellbeing of our community."

I agree with this petition and I've affixed my name to it.

#### CHILD CARE

**Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre):** I have a petition regarding child care. It is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and reads:

"Whereas the Ministry of Community and Social Services is undertaking a review of the child care system in Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, do petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to restore stability and balance to the child care system by:

"(1) ensuring that all licensed child care providers are treated equally with all sectors having both the same benefits and responsibilities;

"(2) ensuring that all licensed child care centre staff receive the same benefits from the government, specifically the wage enhancement grants, regardless of the status of their employer;

"(3) ensuring that all funding goes directly to the provision of care for children and families in need."

I affix my signature to this petition of 61 signatures.

#### COLLEGE OF TEACHERS

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario regarding the teachers' and citizens' petition regarding Bill 31, An Act to establish the Ontario College of Teachers.

"Whereas the Ontario Legislature is currently debating Bill 31, An Act to establish the Ontario College of Teachers and to make related amendments to certain statutes; and

"Whereas section 4 of this legislation sets up the college's governing council in a manner designed to prevent ordinary teachers from forming a majority; and

"Whereas section 12 gives the Minister of Education draconian powers to override the will of the elected governing council; and

"Whereas sections 33 and 34 give college investigators the right to enter teachers' workplaces and homes, by force if necessary, to search for 'something relevant' to charges against teachers; and

"Whereas section 28 gives the college's discipline committee power to revoke teacher certification and assess fines of up to \$5,000 plus legal costs; and

"Whereas, under section 52, a teacher unjustly accused of professional incompetence would have no rights to undertake legal action against the college, even if it was shown to have neglected or defaulted in the performance of its duties; and

"Whereas section 53 makes Ontario teachers retroactively responsible for all expenses incurred in establishing the college since April 1, 1994, plus interest; and

"Whereas this bill contains many other provisions too numerous to mention which are an insult to the professionalism of Ontario teachers, who will be forced without their consent to pay for the College of Teachers;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, call upon the government of Ontario to withdraw Bill 31 and to undertake a sincere process of consultation with Ontario teachers prior to reintroduction of another such bill."

I affix my signature as I'm in agreement with this petition.

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I have a petition that is signed by residents of both the ridings of Sudbury East and Windsor-Riverside. It reads as follows:

"Whereas it is vital that occupational health and safety services provided to workers be conducted by organizations in which workers have faith;

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers have provided such services on behalf of workers for many years;

"Whereas the centre and clinics have made a significant contribution to improvements in workplace health and safety and the reduction of injuries, illnesses and death caused by work;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode the structure, services or funding of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers; and

"Further, we, the undersigned, demand that education and training of Ontario workers continue in its present form through the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and that professional and technical expertise and advice continue to be provided through the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers."

I affix my signature to the petitions, and I agree entirely with the petitioners.

1610

#### CONDOMINIUM LEGISLATION

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** To the Parliament of Ontario:

"Whereas the present Condominium Act of Ontario does not give the condominium corporations the legal right to limit the number of people who occupy each unit in the complex, thus causing overcrowded situations in many buildings; and

"Whereas this overcrowding creates excessive demand on services and facilities of the condominiums, leading to tensions, violence, fire and health problems, increased maintenance expenses and depreciation of values;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"We strongly recommend that the Condominium Act of Ontario be amended to give condominium corporations, through their own rules and regulations, the legal right to limit the number of persons per unit and a right of entry to ensure adherence to the rules.



"The rights of condominium owners and taxpayers must be considered and supported in order to alleviate this inequitable situation."

I'm very happy to support this petition.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Mr Barrett from the standing committee on regulations and private bills presented the committee's first report, 1996.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

**Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk):** I am pleased to present this report on regulations filed during most of 1994 and all of 1995 in accordance with the committee's terms of reference as contained in the Regulations Act and the standing orders. The committee is required to examine regulations, to consider the scope and method of the exercise of regulation-making power, but not the underlying policies or legislative objectives.

I would particularly like to acknowledge the work done by the lawyers of the legislative research service, who served as counsel to the committee and who conducted the initial examination of over 1,200 regulations.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND CONSULTATION IMPROVEMENT ACT, 1996

#### LOI DE 1996 AMÉLIORANT LE PROCESSUS D'ÉVALUATION ENVIRONNEMENTALE ET DE CONSULTATION PUBLIQUE

Mrs Elliott moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 76, An Act to improve environmental protection, increase accountability and enshrine public consultation in the Environmental Assessment Act / Projet de loi 76, Loi visant à améliorer la protection de l'environnement, à accroître l'obligation de rendre des comptes et à intégrer la consultation publique à la Loi sur les évaluations environnementales.

**Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Environment and Energy):** This government is committed to an environmental assessment process that is accessible, workable and focused on environmental protection. Towards this end, I introduced Bill 76, the Environmental Assessment and Consultation Improvement Act, on June 13.

During the past 20 years, Ontario has gained invaluable experience with the environmental assessment process. One thing that has been made clear is the need to modernize EA and to make it more workable for everyone involved. Heartaches of unresolved and uncertain processes have extended to all parts of the province over the past few years. Even previous governments have recognized the need. In fact, several elements of what you'll find in the Environmental Assessment and Consultation

Improvement Act were generated under such efforts as the environmental assessment program improvement project.

Bill 76 is long overdue. Previous governments have delivered administrative reforms. They were helpful, but they did not go far enough. They didn't address what's really wrong with the environmental assessment process in Ontario. Unworkability is what is wrong with the current process and must be changed. Here are some examples: In my riding, the Guelph-Wellington waste management process has taken 12 years and cost \$4 million, with no decision; the timber management class EA spent four and a half years in hearings and cost \$20 million before a decision was made; the Ontario Waste Management Corp took 15 years and \$145 million, only to be rejected.

The main goal of our reforms is to reach the most environmentally protective decision. This means getting to "yes" quicker for environmentally sound projects and to "no" quicker for environmentally harmful projects. We believe these changes will be a great relief to communities under the shadow of protracted and expensive environmental assessments.

In these reforms we are going to ensure that our harmonization proposals result in the best environmental protection. Let me point out that our goal is one environmental assessment for one project. Multiple assessments cost more, take longer and do not provide better environmental protection.

We are working towards an agreement with the federal government on harmonized environmental assessments, as are other provinces. When we work with another jurisdiction, we will be able to use the best features of both processes, and of course the other jurisdiction has just as much at stake as we have in protecting the environment.

Under these amendments, the minister retains the power to refer an environmental assessment to the Environmental Assessment Board for public hearings. By focusing the issues and providing strict time lines, the amendments will make for more timely and cost-effective public hearings. In this way ministers will be confident that when they send a project before the board, the contentious environmental issues will be the focus of the hearing and the board can reach an appropriate decision quickly.

Alternatives will be addressed under the new process. Let me assure my colleagues that these reforms commit to a full environmental assessment. The requirement to consider project rationale and alternatives remains.

I believe, importantly, that in establishing the terms of reference for a project, there will be an opportunity for the first time for all affected stakeholders to comment on the scope and on the level of detail being proposed for the environmental assessment right at the beginning of the project. The further approval by the minister ensures appropriate accountability as a project begins.

I look forward to the committee hearings on Bill 76 and I hope the members in this House share my concerns for carrying forward these long overdue reforms.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Questions or comments?



**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** I'm pleased to respond to the Minister of Environment and Energy's statement about Bill 76. Certainly this bill is long overdue. The Environmental Assessment Act has been very difficult for many municipalities and private industry to deal with in the past. I'm very pleased to see it being brought forward at this time.

Certainly during the campaign in my area it was mentioned many times over, the frustration they were having, particularly in Northumberland county, of trying to get on with a landfill site. It was costing in the neighbourhood of \$2 million and they just were not winning and not getting anywhere. They were going back, looking at alternatives over and over again, and these are dollars being spent for really very little purpose at all. You can repeat that story with Peterborough county in eastern Ontario, with Kingston. All have spent a tremendous amount of money in accomplishing nothing.

As one individual commented to us on going out and looking at all the possible sites within the jurisdiction, it's like going out on a lake to go fishing and if you want to catch a certain fish, you have to catch all of them in the lake, look them over, throw everything back except the one you want to keep and then on you go. That's the ridiculous point we've found ourselves in with this particular bill, that we're just spending horrendous quantities of time, money and effort and really not getting very many landfill sites or many projects approved in general.

Certainly this act will modernize and will streamline and make things happen a whole lot faster than has occurred in the past. Working with the federal government and harmonizing, as other provinces are doing, will be consistent with the improvements of this particular act and I, for one, along with minister, look forward to the hearings this summer to see the opinions of the public of Ontario.

1620

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** I am pleased to have the opportunity to address the comments of the Minister of Environment and Energy on this particular matter. I'm somewhat surprised she chose to run out of the chamber when the member for Northumberland stood up.

Nevertheless, I want to say that there need to be some changes in the Environmental Assessment Act. There obviously have been some problems, but I look at some of the problems, as the member for Northumberland articulates, some difficulties in the siting of landfills in my constituency. Certainly the process has not been part of the solution — I would agree with him there — but one of the things I'm finding some difficulty with at this present time is, if we look at the situation of Little Current-Howland, for example, they've gone through this very arduous process to site a landfill. It has taken years and years.

They now have identified a site, but they are now in the situation that they are looking for funding to both close the present site and open the new site. They've been bumped down the list, I believe, two years in a row, and in my opinion they have not much prospect of solving a problem that has been a problem for those

municipalities for quite a considerable length of time, because the government will not live up to the commitments for funding that had been made over the years. While I think this may help, I am concerned that the funding isn't there to actually address the problems.

More importantly, I think I'm concerned — I know I'm concerned — particularly with the lack of standards. We need to know what the standards will be under this new act.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence):** I am delighted to speak on this bill, Bill 76, and I am delighted to see that the throngs have assembled to hear my address in the Legislature today. I am sure that once they begin to hear my address, they will take note and we will have a greater assemblage here of members at some point in time.

**Mr Michael Brown:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The member for Lawrence deserves to have a quorum in this place. I don't believe there's a quorum present.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Would you check for a quorum, please.

**Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees (Ms Deborah Deller):** Speaker, a quorum is not present.

*The Deputy Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees:** Speaker, a quorum is now present.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The Chair recognizes the member for Lawrence.

**Mr Cordiano:** I am sure the members opposite would greatly appreciate listening to what the members of the opposition have to say on various bills, but more importantly, I would have hoped the minister would have sat in her place to listen to what members of the opposition had to say about her legislation. I'm a little disappointed the minister is not here.

Mr Speaker, before I carry on with my address, I would like to ask for consent to apportion part of the time that would remain in this leadoff to the member for St Catharines should that time not be used by myself.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Agreed? Agreed.

**Mr Cordiano:** Let me begin to talk about Bill 76, which is a very important piece of legislation that we are considering today. Let me start by saying that we cannot allow environmental neglect to affect the health of individuals and communities around this province. I might add that when it comes to the environment, there's a relationship between a healthy environment and indeed a healthy economy and the health of all citizens.

Let's not forget that when we address the question of the environment we are talking about a number of things. We're talking about a safer environment for the health of the people of this province and we're also talking about a healthier economy. Lest we forget, ultimately we must consider that if there is not a healthy environment then we all suffer, we all pay the price.

What are we talking about when we talk about a healthier environment? We're talking about cleaner air. We're talking about safer drinking water. We're talking about better soil for the agriculture industry and for everyone to share. We're concerned about contamination of the soil. We're talking about concerns with respect to



waste management, land use, the consumption of agricultural land; that is to say, the loss of agricultural land to urban sprawl and development.

In all of these things we must always have a proper consideration for the environment that is balanced against the need for greater economic development and the consideration for a healthy, safe environment. When we're talking about cleaner air, let's concern ourselves with what's actually taking place in southern Ontario: the fact that we have a chronic smog problem and it continues unabated. We know what the consequences are of the smog problem. It results in greater respiratory problems for people and animals, and it results in millions and millions of dollars worth of crop damage to Ontario farmers. It's not something to gloss over.

What about drinking water in countless communities out there? I say to the backbenchers on the government's side that many communities face difficulties with respect to drinking water. I'm not suggesting that this problem resulted from your government's administration in the last number of months; it's been a problem for some time.

In 1994 the auditor reported in his findings that the drinking water and the sewage effluent in some communities were not meeting Ministry of Environment and Energy guidelines, and that's a concern for many people.

What I am saying, and will say repeatedly throughout my address, is that it is government's responsibility to ensure that those guidelines are maintained and meet our requirements.

Soil contamination: The proposed new minimum standards for soil cleanup are of concern because they are minimum standards and this government has moved not to subject new landfill sites to mandatory EA hearings. That is of concern to us.

Waste management: In the terms of reference we're talking about there must be agreement on contentious issues. There is a mediation process that takes place. The real consideration there is: What if there is no agreement? What if there are no terms of reference agreed to by communities and proponents? What happens in those instances? Is there an agreement that's forced upon both parties? There's no discussion of that. I did not hear the minister address that and the legislation's not clear about that process. So we have concerns about that.

1630

We believe that procedural reform is necessary, very much part and parcel of what we believe has to be made more efficient and more effective around environmental hearings. There is no question that there have been colossal errors made in the past which have resulted in huge waste and inefficiency — the endless hearings, the search for sites. The minister cited in her opening remarks some of those communities. That needs to be resolved. There's no question we have to move forward. There's no question that more could be done and needed to be done to reform this process. So we are not in disagreement. But at what expense — we ask that question without knowing the answer — to the environment if standards are lowered? We have concerns that the standards being set are not sufficient. So therefore we analyse this with a great deal of caution. Many people have come forward to suggest that those minimum

standards will not be enough. I'll say more about that in a moment.

The legislation also ties the hands of the Environmental Assessment Board members. The board's ability to review environmentally significant projects is severely limited, and that's a concern for us. The board will no longer be able to independently review environmentally significant projects on their own entirely. Again, their latitude to do so has been severely limited by these amendments.

Mandatory consultation: Well, we agree with that. Of course we agree with that. We want input from the public and that is something that we have to support and will continue to support. But, at the same time, what has this government done? They've cut intervenor funding quite severely. So where does that leave groups out there in the community to be able to effectively make their case before the board? It's certainly not acceptable that the government on the one hand says, "We believe in consulting people; we believe in consulting as widely as possible," and then by the same token does not make funding available to the very groups who have to make representations before the board.

We're talking about the environment; we're talking about areas in which expertise is required. We're not talking about the kind of matters that can be easily understood without having some guidance, without having some groups who understand the environment and can bring to bear their expertise. That's why originally intervenor funding was provided, because it allowed for people to access those experts who were necessary to make possible public representation in a fulsome way, to make it possible that communities and groups out there and individuals would be more educated about what was taking place in environmentally complex areas. The environment, I would add, is a complex area to understand in its full breadth and scope. So intervenor funding is something that should be looked at very carefully by this government, and to have pulled that back and to suggest that there is public consultation while at the same time cutting funding is unacceptable, because it rings hollow; it's a vacuous promise.

Landfill sites: There's no requirement that communities must be willing to be hosts of another community's waste. There's no obligation under this act. I might add that when the government was in opposition they said, "No community that is unwilling to do so will be obligated to take another community's garbage." What essentially is happening under this legislation is there is no consideration, there's no obligation. That's fine, but by the same token there is no other process in place to ensure that a landfill site comes into existence to take care of the problem. The very problem that we are addressing, that this legislation proposes to address, may end up being the problem in the future, because there isn't a well-defined process that is easily understood at this point in time.

It goes on to say, "No region can transport its waste to another municipality in the province without a resolution of the recipient municipality indicating that it is a 'willing host' for such waste." That's what the government said when it brought forward an opposition day motion on



December 4, 1990, and I'd like to repeat that: "This House therefore calls upon the Minister of the Environment to provide that...no region can transport its waste to another municipality in the province without a resolution of the recipient municipality indicating that it is a 'willing host' for such waste."

It is very clear where the government stood prior to the election and it is not so clear now. A resolution would have been required. There is no resolution required now, so we're not sure what the minister will do. This legislation gives the minister the authority to deal with this process that isn't very clear and gives the minister unusual powers to move in that regard.

I continue to make the case that we have concerns with respect to this legislation that go beyond what is being proposed, precisely because we're not certain of the outcomes. We're not certain that this process would streamline the environmental assessment hearings and result in a resolution within a timely period and would not result in hidden costs to the environment and to those communities that are affected. Ultimately, we want to make sure that when the minister deals with this, the minister is not acting arbitrarily and without due regard for what has gone on in that particular community.

The new process also — and I'd like to deal with this for a moment — deals with the fact that a proponent must put forward terms of reference which define the environmental issues around contaminants, noise and leachate. As I said earlier, there is a mediation process if the terms of reference are not agreed to by both the proponent and the community.

Finally, to reiterate this, the minister seeks public input on the terms of reference and then would approve the document. Contentious issues can be set out for 60 days of mediation, and that is where the problem lies, because if there is no agreement, one wonders what would follow. Would the minister intervene and act in an arbitrary fashion or a unilateral fashion and bring a forced resolution on the two parties?

If there is, however, an agreement on the terms of reference, the proponent would prepare an EA document and consult with interested persons. The EA document is submitted to the ministry. The public and any interested government agencies can submit comments but only for a period of up to 60 days, and then send the EA document for an Environmental Assessment Board hearing.

1640

The minister, however, will only allow the EA board to examine issues that are deemed to be contentious and the minister will assign that time line — as I say, an example might be three months. The board does not have the power to examine any issues not assigned by the minister. The EA board or the public cannot appeal the minister's decision.

That gives the minister unprecedented powers, unilateral powers, to deal with this matter, and I thought we were in a sense trying to get away from decisions that are made in the absence of community input, in the absence of a particular community deciding what was in its interests. This government has spoken many times about the single taxpayer, and I'll talk about this in a moment, has spoken many times about the interests of various

communities across this province, and one wonders if they have the true interests of communities and individuals at heart.

We sit here in the Legislature and examine what this government is attempting to do, and ultimately you can't help but be cynical with respect to what a government says it intends to do and then what it ends up doing. On some of the major issues with respect to budgetary items, this government has brought forward its budget and has gone through with some of its agenda. But let's talk about the environment. Let's talk about areas in which this government, I believe, does not have the true interests of communities at heart nor the true interests of Ontarians at heart.

The environment is one of those areas which will be sacrificed by this government. Why? Because they believe the environment is not important, that in fact, in order to have a sound economy and to have a relinquishing of the regulatory burden, they must dismantle the regulatory process that was in place, the regulatory regime. We're seeing evidence of that each and every day, as this government brings forward legislation to amend, to alter, to dismantle the regulatory systems, the regulatory authority that was in place.

I would again say to the government, there was a need for reform, but we wonder if we can be confident about a government that would sacrifice the regulatory regime so much so in order for what it believes is the correct course of action on the economy, that is, to have a regulatory regime which is not necessarily only streamlined but also dismantled — because there is a difference. There is a difference between having a regulatory regime which is efficient and effective and one which is simply a pale image of what was there before, an infant, an orphan of what was there before.

I suspect that's where we'll end up with this particular government. We're becoming cognizant of its true intention. They believe the road to nirvana, economic salvation, is to dismantle the regulatory regime in every way conceivable. They do not believe it is that regulatory regime which permits us to have a proper balance between concerns for the environment, concerns for individuals' health, concerns for really what amounts to a sound economy, based on good regulatory provisions, regulatory processes, a regulatory regime which takes into consideration all of those things.

Ultimately the people of this province are willing, the good people that they are right across this province, to give this government an opportunity to bring forward its agenda. But it is our job as the opposition to stand in our places and to continually point out the inconsistencies, the errors and the omissions, and that's what we're attempting to do with this piece of legislation.

We have in the Minister of Environment someone who, shall we say, is less than concerned about some of the issues I raise here today. I cannot understand how a Minister of Environment could say on the one hand that she's concerned about smog, pollution and the quality of our air, and on the other suggest she would never take public transit, or rarely would she take it, or even consider taking it because her schedule's too busy.



That's not good enough. A Minister of Environment should by example — even if that was a slipup. I understand the minister is a new member to this Legislature, but she's been in office for almost a year now as a minister and certainly one could not have anticipated those kinds of remarks from the minister in the last couple of months. It sets the tone. It sets the tone for members of the opposition, for members of the public, to then wonder about the true intentions of the Minister of Environment who gives short shrift to considerations around public transit.

On the one hand, you have the Minister of Environment who says: "I won't take public transit. My schedule's too busy. I've got to have a car and a driver at all times." That's understandable. We're all busy in this Legislature and ministers are particularly busy. But by the same token, is it the right thing to say about public transit that it is not effective and efficient and that it would be beneath her to take that same system that many Ontarians have to use each and every day?

You have the Minister of Environment on the one hand, as I say, and then you have the famous, or shall I say the infamous Minister of Transportation, who on his advent of becoming Minister of Transportation for this province said that he'd — what was it he said? He said something about huskies and a dogsled and: "What? Do you expect me to come down from Highway 7 by dogsled? I've got to have a car and a driver, a chauffeur available to me at all times." He certainly has not upheld the reputation of a fine institution like the TTC, which his current colleague the former boss of the TTC, who sits close to him in the House, was a champion of, if I recall correctly. Certainly the TTC should not be spoken about by a minister of the crown of this government, particularly a Minister of Transportation who I would expect to have a greater understanding of the pressures that we face and the people of this province face.

My Lord, all you need to do is travel our 400 series highways on any weekend and any time during the week — it doesn't even have to be rush hour; it can be at any time during the week, any time during the day or on weekends — and find what a tremendous amount of traffic there is on these 400 series highways. Travelling from Toronto to Hamilton is almost a bumper-to-bumper affair now. It is not acceptable that we have a Minister of Transportation who does not give his full support to public transit, a government that is paying short shrift to public transit.

This government, once it's cutting the funding for rapid transit, cutting the funding for all those subway lines which were supposed to be built, one questions what level of commitment it truly has to both public transit and therefore the environment, because one is linked to the other. You cannot have an improvement in the quality of air around this province if we don't recognize that we need to have a greater commitment to public transit.

1650

It's not good enough that the Minister of Transportation — I was going to say the minister of highways because the only thing he seems to believe in these days is to get out there and fill potholes. While we want potholes to be dealt with, it's not good enough that we have

a Minister of Transportation who does not believe in public transit, who would not make the case at the cabinet table along with his colleague, the Minister of Environment and Energy, to make a more solid commitment to rapid transit, public transportation. How in the world are we ever going to deal with the smog problems and the concerns around air quality? I don't understand how that cannot be a consideration for both those ministers.

The problems around air quality are getting worse, not better. Yes, it has been successive governments. Yes, there is overflow smog from the US. It's not something that this government created alone, but this government is giving us no confidence that it is prepared to deal with this problem in a consistent fashion. One would suggest that they will take this problem on, take it seriously, take it with a great deal more commitment than they have shown to date —

**Mr Galt:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: We happen to be debating Bill 76. The discussion and the comments that have been made in the last five minutes have nothing to do with Bill 76. I wonder if the person making the presentation might consider getting on topic.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I've been listening attentively. He is discussing the environment, the air, and I see nothing out of order.

**Mr Cordiano:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I'm glad to see that somebody's awake. I was beginning to get worried that people weren't listening to me attentively, and I'm glad to see someone is. I'm glad to see that.

Where was I? I was making progress on my efforts to dismantle this government while I talk about that they dismantled the regulatory regime around the environment.

This government's Minister of Environment has not lived up to the standard, shall we say, of previous ministers of the environment. I believe there is one previous Minister of the Environment who's sitting in the House right now. Yes, the member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore. Yes, indeed.

**Mr Michael Brown:** Bring back Morley. We're campaigning for you, Morley.

**Mr Cordiano:** It brings back memories. Those were the days of Progressive Conservative governments, unlike what we're seeing today in this assemblage across the aisle. You're more reminiscent of the Family Compact than Progressive Conservative governments, and, I might add, you have a problem with distinguishing, when someone observes what is taking place in this Legislature, between yourselves and another party on the right, a federal party. I just caution you that you are beginning to lose your identity. We'll have to call you a Reform Party in short order.

But getting back to the environment and getting back to the Environmental Assessment Act, again I would say to members opposite that we are in favour of streamlining, making more efficient and more effective the procedures around environmental assessment hearings. The entire process needed to be revamped and reformed, but there is no doubt that there are gaps and inconsistencies in this bill which concern a great many people. There are gaps, and I will reiterate what I said earlier. I will reiterate for the members new landfill and site decontamination standards.



We're concerned that minimum requirements will be basic and will not be enough to overcome or stem the concerns that have been expressed by many groups out there.

When you take away intervenor funding — I repeat for the members the concerns we have — it does not make it possible to have good, solid public input that would result in a true public consultation process which is meaningful for people and for communities. We want to make sure that groups have the kind of input that is necessary. The expertise involved with environmental considerations is of a high order. This is not to suggest that groups out there, or your average citizen, have not become more knowledgeable about the environment; certainly that is not the case. But some of these areas are very complex and require additional assistance. If you have a community liaison group that is working within this process, I suggest to the government, in order for it to be a meaningful process you must have that intervenor funding. The amount that has been cut is quite severe and would not suffice.

Another consideration around this — the minister said this in her opening remarks — was the effort to harmonize the Environmental Assessment Act provincially with the federal act. That is on the surface an appropriate thing to do. However, as has been pointed out, some groups are concerned that the federal environmental process is a much weaker process than the provincial one and that the minimum would therefore fall to the federal minimum and maybe even below that. We're seeing here a lowering of minimum standards and we are concerned that those standards are not sufficient. Ultimately people will decide.

The character of this government is revealing itself around this question of the environment and around other questions as they move to dismantle governmental operations, the regulatory framework that's been in place and built up over many years by previous administrations, by previous Progressive Conservative governments that have made it possible to have some of the finest environmental processes in place. To have a framework which from successive generations was built upon, to have the kind of quality we have in terms of the environment should not be overlooked by this administration.

I say that to the previous Minister of the Environment, the member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore, whose government in those days, the Bill Davis government, was also responsible for increasing the level of concern around the environment and the amount of consideration for the environment through the regulatory framework that was established in those days.

We get to this government in this day and age, and I believe this government thinks it is living in a different era when people were not concerned about the environment. It is not one of those issues which registers with voters at the top of their priority list. I tell you, you're making a big mistake, because as this question becomes a concern around health and around how we do business in this province, the fact is that when people are concerned about their health, they will once again be concerned about questions surrounding the environment. It's the smog that we see in our cities and it's the concern

around clean water, safe drinking water that has brought the attention to the forefront in terms of priority issues.  
**1700**

Now, we went through a difficult time in the economy and therefore people turned their attention to the economy, but let's not overlook the fact that the environment can be a sound harbinger of economic growth, can work in harmony with economic considerations. Considerations around environmental concerns need not come at the expense of economic growth, or vice versa.

I say to the government it needs to have a different approach when these considerations are coming forward. The gaps, the inconsistencies in the legislation need to be pointed out time and again, because we are concerned that at the end of the day the minister will end up with unilateral powers superseding those of communities, disregarding a true consultation process, disregarding and overriding a true hearings process which would permit real public input of the kind we had in the past.

The need for reform is essential, but let us not forget that it should not come at the expense of standards which are acceptable to every community, which are acceptable to every citizen in this province, and do not come at their expense with respect to their own health and safeguards in the environment for water and air.

I would again like to point out that on so many fronts this government has taken the axe to the regulatory framework. As I said earlier, they are dismantling that regulatory framework because this is a government that believes in doing less for less. This is a government that is not doing more for less, as they would like to suggest. Time and again we have seen that this government is prepared to take the axe to every ministry, every budget within those ministries, and forsaking a number of considerations around what is appropriate, what is necessary, what is the level of standards that need to be maintained, they're doing less for less.

I pointed out the other day a case of one of my constituents who happens to be disabled who was let go by the Ministry of Housing. This person is now facing the situation where he's being forced on to welfare. He was a contributing member of our society who had worked for the people of this province for so many years. He was a diligent worker, had given much to the people of this province, and this is this government's idea of making things more efficient and more effective. To push someone on to welfare, someone who had a decent job, who was contributing — that's their idea of making things more efficient. That's their idea: adding to the welfare rolls.

My concern is that this government is moving with lightning speed to dismantle the regulatory framework and leaving a whole host of victims in its wake. Why should the people of this province have faith in this government in these very critical and vital areas? Oh yes, you're riding high in the polls today.

**Mr Michael Brown:** Are they?

**Mr Cordiano:** Some people have suggested that. I guess Angus Reid is saying that, Angus Reid, whose polls have come and gone. He's a pollster of some repute in this province and across this country and I would accept those results. I would accept that this government



is slightly more in favour at this time, but I can recall previous governments that have governed by polls. Again, it relates to the environment, because they are looking at those very polls and deeming that the environment is not an important question, that for some people in this province their fear around economic considerations and job creation is the number one priority. Indeed it is, but that should not come at the expense of environmental safeguards; that should not come at the expense of people's health and consideration around this province for communities that have to deal with these very difficult issues around waste management and landfill sites.

We raise this concern in consideration of those communities, in consideration of those people because time and again this government has demonstrated that it will wilfully ignore regulations, cutting them down to the point where there is no consideration for people and what might happen, what the consequences of their actions might be in community after community across this province. There was colossal waste around all those —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Cordiano:** Well, in the previous administration — we agreed on the abolition of the Interim Waste Authority. No doubt there were many millions of dollars wasted. On the other hand we concern ourselves, if agreements are not reached where sites are proposed and hearings are not held and there is a mediation process, that the minister can act unilaterally, almost with dictatorial powers in community after community.

I remind members of the now infamous Bill 26. Let's not forget what this government tried to do in ramming that piece of legislation through this Legislature, bypassing every element of democracy that existed in this great Legislature, totally ignoring that omnibus piece of legislation, had it not been for the great stand that was taken by my colleague the member for Scarborough North, who stood up to this government to say: "No. We draw the line in the sand."

Great honour and great integrity were displayed by my colleague in his valiant efforts to stop the government in their actions and to suggest to members opposite, particularly the backbenchers of the government who were not so well versed in the workings of this Parliament and I think were bamboozled by their front bench: "Oh, don't worry about it. We'll just get this through" — bamboozled by the front bench and members of their cabinet who didn't even know what was in the piece of legislation. That is why we are concerned about environmental questions.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Take your seat. We're debating Bill 76.

**Mr Cordiano:** I get back to matters with respect to Bill 76, but if you listen to my comments carefully, it is important to understand what this government is attempting to do and the character of this government's actions which informs every decision they make along the way. It's like they're on automatic pilot. We know what they will do. That's what concerns us. If Bill 26 is an example of the way they will deal with each and every one of these sensitive issues, then we have cause for concern. We are deeply concerned because their actions belie the

very notion of consideration for this Legislature and its great workings as a truly democratic place.

We point that out time and again in this great chamber of ours because this bill is of great interest to many people across this province for precisely that reason. The environment is something that affects everyone regardless of age, background or income. It affects everyone. Ultimately the consideration of the gaps and the inconsistencies in the legislation and the behaviour of this Minister of Environment are of concern to us, because there are unilateral powers that have been granted to this minister in this piece of legislation.

1710

That is why, time and again, we point out that we are concerned about what the true intentions of this Minister of Environment are, and what her colleagues around the table in cabinet, members of the cabinet such as the Minister of Environment, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and others —

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** You're calling?

**Mr Cordiano:** Oh, yes, we're calling on you, Minister, and we'll be calling on you repeatedly in question period to answer for what you have done and for what you've failed to do.

Again, I would say to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, who is in the House at present, stand up and speak. Will you tell the Minister of Transportation that the TTC is in fact one of the great systems in North America and the world, that it does impact on the environment, that he should be very supportive of public transit?

**Hon Mr Leach:** Oh, I am.

**Mr Cordiano:** Well, you've got to do a better job of it because the minister is not convinced. He keeps standing up in this assembly and outside of this place to lambaste the TTC around its operations and —

**Hon Mr Leach:** There's always a difference of opinion.

**Mr Cordiano:** There are inconsistencies there.

We concern ourselves with that, about the fact that members of the cabinet would not uphold the true integrity of the environment and be concerned about maintaining the highest standards for air quality, for clean water, safe water, for those landfill sites, the use of land, land use planning.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs is here and I want to relate to him the concerns we have around — it's an environmental question. It concerns Bill 76 with respect to landfill sites, the amount of arable land that is being chewed up, the amount of agricultural land that is being chewed at, the very good agricultural land across the GTA. A great deal of land is being utilized for development. No one's against development and economic growth, but we have the famous and now forgotten, it seems, Golden report, which talked about land use planning. It talked about a more compact form. It talked about how to make it more efficient in the GTA, how to make things more efficient and how that compact urban form would result in \$1 billion in savings for this government around infrastructure costs. I would add to this that



rapid transit needs to be a focus of this government, of any government in this great province of ours.

**Hon Mr Leach:** Subways.

**Mr Cordiano:** Not subways necessarily — they're expensive — but I think you need to have a better GO Transit system, an overland system that everyone could use and would be effective. No one's talking about that and I think that's something that has to be considered.

Nothing out of the Minister of Transportation, nothing out of the Minister of Municipal Affairs. When is it, Minister, that we're going to hear from you about that report, about changes to the property assessment act, changes to the consideration for rapid transit around the recommendations in the Golden report?

**Hon Mr Leach:** Soon.

**Mr Cordiano:** I hope so. I hope it's soon because time's running out on you, Minister. There's a cabinet shuffle coming, so stand up and be counted. Stand up and show them you're made of finer stuff and you will find your colleagues will respect you more for that, because there are these big considerations, these issues that are of importance to everyone, importance around, as I said, clean air, water, health concerns, and furthermore, concerns around how our economy can work properly, how our economy can be sustained and spurred on by environmental considerations.

This government needs to take a much more wholly integrated approach to economic development, along with considerations for the environment, to be part of that equation, to be part of what they do, to ensure the people of this province — again I will repeat this — that we don't have chaos on our highways. It's bumper-to-bumper traffic. It is incredible. You cannot get around this province in an efficient, timely fashion. It affects our industries. It affects those firms out there that have to put their goods on the road. It's affecting them daily; it's costing millions, maybe billions of dollars each and every day.

That's what I wanted to focus on with respect to the environment. It has to be considerations around economic efficiency. That can be in conjunction with considerations around the environment. Having a much more effective rapid transit system for not just Metro Toronto, but right across the GTA, right into the Golden Horseshoe — we need to have a much more effective system and this government is not paying lip-service to any of that; it's going in the opposite direction.

We will have the completion of Highway 407, which should alleviate some of the problem, but I've heard that as soon as 407 opens it will be at 100% capacity; it won't take too long. Within days of its opening that highway will be clogged, and there isn't going to be any release of any of the pressures on the other 400 series highways. They're operating at overcapacity. We have a huge problem to be dealt with.

I want to complete my remarks by saying that with respect to the Environmental Assessment Act there are gaps, inconsistencies and concerns that we've presented today and that the minister needs to go back to the drawing board and deal with — concerns around intervenor funding, the cutting of that; concerns around landfill site decontamination standards, the lowering of

those standards; the time lines that have been set in place with respect to the hearings process; the mediation that's required and the time lines associated with that; and the ability of the minister to intervene to unilaterally make decisions within this act which concern us.

In the past the existing legislation provided that any new landfill sites, that all major landfill sites would be subject automatically to EA hearings. That is no longer the case under this piece of legislation; they could be subject to EA hearings but it's not a mandatory feature of this legislation. Unless this process is much better defined, more streamlined, more effective and deals with some of the concerns and the inconsistencies and gaps we've pointed out in this legislation, then we will continue to express our caution around the measures that have been taken by this government. We will not be in support of the dismantling of the regulatory framework we have in place holus-bolus without consideration for these areas of significant concern.

Let me say in conclusion that the minister and this government have some work to do. This government has to make a better case for the environment, has to link all of those considerations around clean air and water. The standards, which are now minimum standards, concern us.

The time that remains I want to allocate to my colleague the member for St Catharines, as was agreed to before. Thank you for this opportunity to speak.

1720

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I will continue the leadoff for the Liberal opposition on this particular bill. What I want to demonstrate or indicate to those who are in the House and others who may be watching is how this bill fits a pattern of this government in the reduction of environmental standards and the reduction of emphasis on environmental matters within the province of Ontario. There isn't anybody I know of who hasn't seen some flaw in the system of environmental assessment on reflection.

Some of the people who could give us some expertise on this would be those who have sat as members of the panel, who have sat on the Environmental Assessment Board, who have sat through rather lengthy hearings which were very much dominated by lawyers and experts and where the legal arguments that were carried on were often lengthy and not as pertinent to the case as many would like to see. Their advice is timely; it is useful advice. There are many on all sides of environmental issues who have made representations on how the process can be made more efficient and yet every bit as stringent as it was in the past.

What this bill does is ease those regulations. It is more, as the government likes to say, business-friendly. If it's going to be business-friendly in terms of environmental considerations, most of the time that means it's not going to be consumer-friendly or environmentally friendly.

I noticed an article by the dean of the press gallery which was just in today's St Catharines Standard. It says, "Harris Finds Inspiration South of the Border." That's one of the concerns I have in the field of the environment, because while in some states and under some areas of jurisdiction within the Environmental Protection Agency the United States has made some significant



advances, particularly in the late 1980s, perhaps the early 1990s, we have seen a determined effort on the part of the anti-environment people in the United States, largely led by the Republican guard, who have been trying to weaken environmental regulations and legislation in the United States.

The interesting thing is that it's being resisted. The Republican Party miscalculated because some of its supporters, it has found out — Mr Gingrich, who is the Speaker of the House, the most powerful person in the United States House of Representatives, has found in consultation — perhaps it's one-way consultation. The environmentally minded people within the Republican Party have been consulting him and putting their views forward and have expressed to him a great concern that the Republican Party might be noted as a party which is anti-environment, wanting to weaken things related to the environment.

What I have found over the years is that there are many people in various political parties who have an environmental conscience. One can't say that the NDP or the Liberals or the Conservatives, as individuals within parties, are automatically more environmentally conscious than others. There are people within all three parties who have very strong environmental considerations in the philosophy they espouse.

I see what's happening south of the border: Some governors within the United States have wanted to weaken these regulations in the Congress. Now that the Republicans have control of both the Senate and the House of Representatives, we've seen several moves to try to, as they would say, "ease" — I would say "weaken" — environmental regulations and policy statements and legislation. This and an environmental approvals bill that's before us both move in this direction. It's a general thrust with the government.

If you will recall the changes to the Planning Act, many of those were designed to please developers in the province. We have some excellent developers in our province, people who have done an outstanding job, in many cases, of providing developments that are environmentally acceptable and have been good for the province, have put money in the pockets of many in the province, and we have others who have not been as good at doing this. The Planning Act, in essence, allows for, as I consider it, worse planning principles to be applied.

I'm beginning to see some of those in the Niagara Peninsula right now. As the Planning Act is changed, we're seeing some decisions being made by certain local governments which leave a lot to be desired in terms of their planning considerations. When we saw a weakening of the environmental provisions of the Planning Act, we again saw a weakening of this government's commitment to the environment.

Another place we've seen that is the field of transit, which has been mentioned, where the member for Lawrence indicated that we have seen a diminishing of the amount of money provided by the provincial government for public transit. The Conservative Party — it varies; it depends on the era — in many cases has not been in favour of public transit. They consider that somehow the granola set is in favour of public transit and

others believe everybody should drive his or her own vehicle at all times. While our country in its geography and our province in its geography certainly both dictate that we sometimes use our vehicles, particularly if we're in rural areas, nevertheless public transit has a significant role to play. This government has diminished its support for public transit in this province, and therefore we've seen an increase in pollution as a result of that and an increase in the need for spending on major highways.

Members of the House will know that there are eight changes to various acts which are deregulation. They came out of my friend the member for Lincoln's exercise, I think, where he looked at various regulations. Contained in those changes, in those bills, are also some changes which I think will adversely impact upon the environment.

There's no question there are many in the government caucus who have a disdain for the Niagara Escarpment Commission; not the member from Peel, who's here this afternoon and who is a known protector of the environment in that area and has been a strong advocate for the Niagara Escarpment Commission; nor, of course, my friend the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, the architect of the Niagara Escarpment Commission and the individual I know who will not let the cabinet destroy that gem of his that he brought in when he was in the Davis cabinet.

**Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton North):** Don't count on it.

**Mr Bradley:** There are some people who say, "Don't count on it." Certainly the Republican guard, as I call them, the true believers like my friend the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale and some of the others, will encourage that. But some of the more moderate members, like the member from Peel, will ensure, I think, that wiser heads will prevail in this particular debate.

I used to think at one time that my friend the member from Peel was a blue Conservative, but when I look at the composition of the present caucus he looks more moderate than I ever thought he looked in the past.

Anyway, there are many areas. I think when you look at the fact that the government is cutting over \$200 million in the Ministry of Environment and Energy, a 37% reduction of the 1994-95 budget, the ministry will lose 752 staff, 31% of current employees, it's obvious that the ministry is going to have to weaken its regulations, weaken its legislation and weaken its enforcement.

This is most unfortunate, for when Premier Davis brought in this legislation dealing with environmental assessment, I don't think he and his ministers could be called raving environmentalists, and I don't think they could be called wild left-wingers; they were simply, as they always were, a practical government that saw a practical problem and said that we need a strong Environmental Assessment Act in order to deal with this problem so that when people brought forward developments or dump sites, for instance, for consideration, there would be careful scrutiny and a determination of whether a plan should move forward. The changes to this act are going to ensure that that process is weakened.

The mediation that it calls for in itself is not a bad thing; mediation is not a bad thing. But the timing of the



mediation, the forcing of those who are opposed to a project in essence to be in at the very, very beginning or come in at the very end, ill-equipped, is certainly evident.

Intervenor funding is not popular with some people because it means, in essence, the developer now has to justify his or her proposal and have it go through a system with people critiquing it. I think intervenor funding, while it has been unpopular with some, has resulted in much better environmental decisions than we had in the past.

What you find out in the environmental assessment process is that most proposals make it through the process; not many of them are stopped by the process. What you find out very often is that the representation that has been made by the opponent, either through experts who are hired to do so or perhaps through the lawyers, but more often through scientific and technical experts, improves the final product.

1730

There was, for instance, in the regional municipality of Peel a garbage incinerator which was approved, but it was approved with some 31 conditions placed on it before it would be allowed to move forward. Without intervenor funding, without the critique provided by experts who were opposed to the development as it had been originally suggested, I suggest to members of this House that the final decision would not have been as good a one and that operationally the incinerator that is in place would not be nearly so environmentally acceptable as it might be under the present conditions. There are still some problems with it, no doubt, and there are some people who are philosophically opposed to it, but when the last government allowed it to go through as the final incinerator to be approved — the proposal had begun under the previous government and was finally approved by the NDP — it saw that there were 31 conditions placed on it.

What you've done by removing the provision for intervenor funding is you've said now, "Only the Albany Club crew will be able to put their proposals forward and have all of the lawyers on their side."

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale):** We will get you a membership in the St Catharines club.

**Mr Bradley:** The member for Etobicoke-Rexdale says that he's going to try to get me a membership in the Albany Club, but I think you have to make at least \$150,000 a year, and I don't make that much.

**Mr Derwyn Shea (High Park-Swansea):** You are in the national club.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order.

**Mr Bradley:** I'll ignore the interjection, Mr Speaker. I know you want me to do so.

When you take away the people who are there to do the inspections, the people who are there to scrutinize the proposals that come through the Ministry of Environment, that means you have to weaken the entire process, so I can understand it follows that with the weakening of the entire Ministry of Environment, you're going to weaken the process. You're not going to have the staff to deal with approvals. You're not going to have the staff to be able to deal with the details of assessment to ensure that you don't get a Pauzé landfill site, and the members who

are up in Simcoe county will know exactly what I'm talking about, or many of the old landfill sites that today are causing problems because they were not appropriately scrutinized and dealt with when they were first proposed and when they were in operation.

I see other examples of the government moving in this direction. The Minister of Mines is in the House this afternoon, and of course he's now put Colonel Sanders in charge of the chicken pen by allowing the mining companies to be in charge of enforcing environmental regulations when, to be fair to everybody, it should certainly have been his ministry that was in charge of that, the Ministry of Mines or the Ministry of Environment as opposed to the companies themselves. That's fair to everybody. It's fair to all businesses and it is fair to the consumers and environmentally conscious people of this province.

I become concerned when I hear that decontamination standards may be weakened as a result of actions of this government. When a site is decommissioned — and it may need some decontamination — there are usually rules and regulations following that decommissioning.

My friend the member for Mississauga South raised in this House and in other places matters related to the decommissioning of old oil refinery sites and other industrial sites in Mississauga.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** The Texaco lands.

**Mr Bradley:** The Texaco lands she makes reference to, and she wanted to ensure, if there was going to be development on those lands, that they had been appropriately decommissioned, that any necessary decontamination took place and that the site would be restored. If you weaken those regulations, you will find of course that this will no longer happen.

The environmental hearings are particularly important for landfill sites because landfill sites are going to be there for a long time. Even after they're closed, the material that's put into them — and fortunately we have set up processes that have legally removed some of the old contaminants that used to go into them. But even today contaminants will result from average landfill sites in this province, and we have to ensure that when the landfill site is approved and constructed it meets all the environmental regulations of the province. Without intervenor funding, I don't know if this will be the case. Certainly with the weakening of these regulations, the guarantees are weakened as well.

I notice that the Minister of Environment has now abandoned the Niagara River team. There was a team set up by Premier Davis and his government to address the major problems with, largely, American landfill sites along the Niagara River that were causing great problems for the river. We have today fish and other forms of aquatic life acquiring tumours, growing tumours, which show evidence of contamination, rather serious evidence of contamination. We have the largest single source of dioxin anywhere in the world at the Hyde Park dump, which is not far from the Niagara River. There have been seeps in the side of the rocks that have been shown to be leaking into that river. We have at least a dozen significant and serious toxic waste dumps along the Niagara



River, and the minister's answer is to disband the team that is monitoring and dealing with this problem.

I can tell you one thing: As soon as you take your eyes off the Americans on environmental issues such as this, particularly with a Republican administration in New York state and in Washington, with the Congress controlled by the Republicans, you're going to find that they lessen their standards and their environmental efforts. That's why we need this team in place. There's a lot of monitoring on an ongoing basis that has to be done. There has to be a determination of —

**Mr Hastings:** More prosecution.

**Mr Bradley:** More prosecution, certainly. The member from Rexdale is correct. I certainly agree with him when he says more prosecutions are needed of those who are in violation of environmental laws and regulations. I know he wouldn't want simply to turn his head the other way if he knew the laws of the province were being broken. Being a law-abiding, law-and-order citizen, he would want to ensure that even the rich and powerful companies would be prosecuted, as well as the people at the other end of the economic scale who are carrying on some other activities. I'm pleased to hear his support for the prosecution of those who would be in violation of our environmental laws.

We have generally with this government a trend towards easing all legislation that might be viewed as environmental legislation. There are those who believe you simply let the companies go ahead and police themselves. Some of the people who argue against that most vociferously and I think in a most compelling sense are those companies who have been good corporate citizens, who have made the changes to improve the environmental performance of their operation, who have trained people to be environmentally sensitive, who have purchased new equipment for the purpose of catching contaminants before they go into the waterways or into the soil or into the air, or who have found new processes which will avoid the production of these toxic wastes in the first place.

Those people worry when you weaken the regulations, because there are others who are less corporately responsible who may break those rules and regulations, who may avoid what I call the high road in terms of environmental endeavours and as a result will make more profit.

In fairness to those good corporate citizens as well as in fairness to the people of this province, it's incumbent upon the government of Ontario to ensure that they have adequate staff and adequate resources and adequate resolve to deal with environmental issues. This bill moves in the opposite direction, as does much of the legislation being brought forward by this government.

We hear of highways that want to be constructed through major centres, and we want to ensure that there's appropriate environmental assessment in those cases and that alternatives are examined. One of the alternatives that is examined when one is looking at putting a major highway through a large metropolitan centre is, has the proponent looked at public transportation as an alternative to the transportation being advocated, that is, yet another superhighway through a city? Again I fear with the lessening of this process that we will see more of those

highways built and less emphasis on major centres which are already congested, less emphasis on public transportation, as we see when subways are constructed in this city, that being environmentally desirable and probably in the long run economically desirable as well.

**1740**

The other issue I look at is the investigation and enforcement branch of the Ministry of Environment. That branch must be totally demoralized now, because at one time it had a lot of authority and clout. When it showed up at a polluting company what happened was as Minister of Environment I would get a rather flippant remark, and I always thought it was an unfortunate remark because they would say, "The Gestapo ended up here two days ago." What they really meant, I knew, was the investigation and enforcement branch, which took no prisoners when it went into environmental settings where the company was clearly in violation of any of the acts of the government.

The investigation and enforcement branch was completely independent of other branches. I made sure it was separated from the approvals branch because I always felt that it was important to have an enforcement branch independent of political interference and independent of other branches of the Ministry of Environment. I'm sure that branch now has a much less significant role to play, and I find that most unfortunate because I thought it was doing a great job to turn around the environment in this province.

I also look at the issue of the air quality in Toronto. When you're looking at these proposals that come before governments or before the Ministry of Environment, before the Environmental Assessment Board, you want people to have the resources to be able to critique those proposals, because what we will end up with are more and more vehicles within an already congested area, within a small geographic area. The Minister of Environment apparently is not prepared to embark upon, at least until she's pushed into it by public pressure, the mandatory testing particularly of older vehicles that may be causing great pollution problems in this province. The clean air program that was on the books and ready to go has disappeared completely. In fact my friends in the NDP didn't even move forward with that. I was surprised because I used to hear them speak often about it.

I notice that the acid rain division of the Ministry of Environment has been hit rather considerably. One of the world-renowned scientists got his pink slip the other day, which is most unfortunate, even though there were letters from all over the world coming into the Ministry of Environment suggesting that he be kept on. I used to listen to my good friend from Mississauga South when she was the environment critic tell me that acid rain had not diminished as a problem; in fact the government had to be more aggressive and go to new levels in terms of cutbacks in emissions of sulphur dioxide and NO<sub>x</sub>. Apparently the government has forgotten that now. The present Minister of Environment has been given her marching orders to disband that branch, or at least to get rid of as many people as possible within her ministry.

We in Ontario used to be the envy of Canada, in fact probably the envy of North America, in many of the



things we did with the Ministry of Environment. People used to come from across North America, even from some other countries that people used to consider to be more environmentally progressive in Europe and other jurisdictions, to see what we were doing in Ontario. We were considered to be the leader in environmental protection, in environmental assessment and in environmental policies.

Today, unfortunately, Ontario is not assuming that leadership and I lament that very much because I think others look to us. With the resources we have in this province and the expertise that's been developed over many, many years and the good people that we've had in the Ministry of Environment to carry out the responsibilities over the years, I think it's lamentable that the government is allowing this ministry to be dismembered part by part in 1996.

I thought there would be people in the government back benches — I know the member for High Park is a strong environmentalist and I know he's probably, behind closed doors, expressing to the government his genuine concern about the cutbacks he's seen in the Ministry of Environment. Being a person who has been on council in Toronto, the city that has been in the forefront on many environmental issues, I know he would be bringing that to the caucus. I hope somebody is listening to him. Perhaps in the shuffle that takes place my friend the member for High Park will be shuffled in and will have more of a say.

**Mr Shea:** Oh, you've just killed me. Thanks, Bradley.

**Mr Bradley:** He says I've just killed him.

In terms of environmental protection, I will not plead with the Premier to bring my friend from Lincoln into the cabinet at this point. I won't ask for that, but I will ask that the member for High Park, for that issue alone — the member for Lincoln has other strengths. One of them I wouldn't consider to be — I would never call him a raving environmentalist. How is that, Frank? That's probably reasonable.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bradley:** He says he's not naturally raving and I'll leave it at that.

I look at this legislation and say, is everything about it wrong? The answer is no, not everything about it is wrong. Is there sufficient that's wrong with it that it does not merit the support of the opposition? I would suggest that is in fact the case. I think the minister should undertake further consultation.

I think one of the areas where there's a fair consensus — I watched the Environmental Assessment Board dealing with the OWMC project and I watched it dealing with the project which was the forestry industry, the forestry policies of the province. In two cases it dealt with that. I think if you talk with members on the board subsequent to decisions being made, because they can't discuss these while they're under consideration, you would find that one of the things they said was that the lawyers took up too much time and too much money in these hearings. We must find a way of being less legalistic and the board should have more power to determine what are relevant arguments and what are not relevant arguments.

It's like watching a judge conducting an inquiry. Some judges conducting an inquiry have a very narrow focus and will not entertain extraneous arguments, or arguments which are certainly not compelling to the case; others tend to be less stringent in this regard. What you find out is that the hearing, of any kind, whether it's a public hearing or an Environmental Assessment Board hearing, will be longer and more comprehensive if a person is prepared to entertain any and all arguments. If the minister can find a way to have the lawyers play less of a role in some of these — not all of them; in some of these — with their arguments, very procedural arguments, the process could be speeded up without any loss to the final product that is produced.

If you want to ensure that this act appropriately applies, you will ensure there is an Environmental Assessment Act hearing for dump sites in this province where the proponent is compelled to look at all possible alternatives as well as the proposal that's put forward and comment on those proposals. That is so it's not only a landfill site, but they look at other potential ways of dealing with the garbage. That makes a lot of sense to me. I think it makes a lot of sense to people who reside close to those dumps, and probably to the environmental community in Ontario.

I hope that as the years progress the government will start to restore some of the funding to the Ministry of Environment because the Ministry of Environment is taking a substantial hit as a result of the cutbacks by this government, cutbacks which are necessitated by the tax cut of 30%, the tax cut which will benefit the rich and the privileged and the most powerful far more than it will benefit those at the bottom end of the scale.

To have this, we have a couple of things coming forward today. It's interesting that you have these bills coming forward today, because the whole weakening in the environmental assessment process, the diminishing in the funding of the Ministry of Environment is necessitated by the 30% tax cut. Similarly, the video lottery terminals bill, which will follow this, is a result of the government needing more revenue to make up for the money it's losing to the very richest people in this province.

1750

The government should rethink this. We in the opposition demanded, and had accepted by the government House leader, hearings on this legislation this summer. There will be an opportunity for those who are opposed to the provisions of this bill, and those who are in favour of the provisions of this bill, to make comment on it.

I hope the government won't simply go through the motions, have the people make their representations to the committee and then only tinker with the legislation. I hope the government will take into account very carefully the well-prepared representations that are made to the committee and make the necessary changes in this legislation so that it is acceptable, not only to government members, but to the opposition and to the people of this province. That's the way the process should work.

Unfortunately, my observation here over the years, through subsequent governments, has been that very little changes from when the legislation is first brought forward



to the final product we see. Unless the legislation is somehow a disaster, the first piece of legislation that comes in looks very much like the final product that the Lieutenant Governor approves when he or she comes into the House to give the nod of approval.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bradley:** I'm going to be counting on my friend the member for Mississauga South to make her representations to her colleagues to improve this legislation.

**Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton):** She will ease their conscience.

**Mr Bradley:** I know I can count on her to do so. I thought she should have been the Minister of Environment in that government. I don't want to embarrass her by saying it and I don't embarrass her. I remember that when she was the critic for the Conservative Party she demonstrated her concern for the environment and wanted to hold both the Liberal and the NDP governments accountable for their environmental policies. I know she'll want to do the same, as will the member for Dufferin-Peel, who was also environment critic. I know he will want to make representations to his colleagues in the cabinet and in the caucus to ensure that the final product that emerges after the hearings which we in the opposition have insisted upon and won, that the government will make the necessary changes to improve this legislation.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** I will be speaking at some great length —

**Mrs Marland:** No; this is Q and C.

**Ms Churley:** I know, Margaret — a little later on. Being the Speaker from time to time, I realize that this is two minutes, Margaret.

I want to say a few words in response to the Liberal speeches earlier today. I would agree with my colleague the member for St Catharines: I was disappointed that the member for Mississauga South was not made the Minister of Environment.

**Mrs Marland:** I ran for the Speaker, remember?

**Ms Churley:** I remember you ran for Speaker too.

But because being Minister of Environment can be a very difficult job at the best of times — and I know my friend the member for St Catharines, who was the Minister of the Environment during fairly good times in Ontario, from time to time had struggles, and I believe he's admitted that publicly, with his Treasurer and with other conflicting interests in his caucus and in his cabinet — that minister needs to be a very strong proponent, a very strong spokesperson for the environment. Sadly, that is lacking in this present government.

It seems to me that if the Premier had chosen somebody who could speak up forcefully, as I know the member for Mississauga South could — I've seen her do it before. I've seen her whip the vote over there to support my bill for further environmental protection in terms of trying to prevent cancer; and that was very much appreciated. I saw her abilities. I saw her in action. I believe the Premier is afraid to put in somebody who would speak forcefully for the environment. I can guarantee, as the member for St Catharines said, that one

of these days people will see what this government is doing in terms of environmental protection.

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel):** I'd like to make a couple of comments with respect to the remarks made by the member for Lawrence and the member for St Catharines. It is interesting to hear the member for St Catharines, a former environment minister; when I think of Whitevale I think about the member for St Catharines. We should never forget what happened at Whitevale.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Tilson:** You groan, and that's what the rest of the province was doing. Talking about environmental assessments, the exemption of that site was unbelievable, and I look forward to whether the member for St Catharines will recall that event and whether he has anything to say about that.

The policies in this bill that are being put forward by the government shouldn't sound a lot like what has been talked about by the Liberals, by the member for St Catharines when he was minister and Mrs Grier when she was Minister of the Environment for the NDP. The environmental assessment program improvement project, which the member for St Catharines may recall, was introduced by his government. He had his administrative people work on that and they made recommendations. Then a task force was put forward for consultation by the NDP. The NDP essentially had public hearings on what the member for St Catharines put forward when he was minister.

If you look at that — I don't know whether the member for Riverdale has read all that business — it is not unlike what is going on in this bill. These are recommendations that your respective governments made in the past, and now you come to us and say you don't like it. I suggest that both the member for Riverdale and the member for St Catharines read what they've done in the past and tell us why they have now changed their minds.

**Mr Michael Brown:** I think the Liberal critics, Mr Bradley from St Catharines and Mr Cordiano from Lawrence, made some exceptionally good points. As our party's critic for natural resources it's incumbent upon me to have the government understand the impact of the cuts to natural resources, to lose 2,000 employees. I want to bring this home because it seems you think that if you eliminate environmental standards, things are going to be good for business and Ontario is going to grow.

I have an example from my constituency. A person proposed that there be a subdivision. That subdivision is not going ahead because of objections from the Ministry of Natural Resources relating to fish habitat. The manager's letter, in commenting on this particular proposal, says: "We will no longer have any control of what happens in the water because we have no staff to enforce it and we have no permitting system any more to keep people from doing improper works in the water adjacent to the property on the lake. Because we don't have that capacity any longer, we could not possibly entertain any subdivision of any property nearby because we could not ensure that we can protect the spawning shoals."

The absolute absence of enforcement and proper regulation is keeping Ontario from moving forward,



stopping subdivisions, because no one can rely on the government to step in and maintain proper standards.

**Mr Galt:** I'd like to respond to the member for Lawrence and the member for St Catharines and thank them for their support. It's obvious from the weak debate they put forth that they're very supportive of this bill going through. They weren't on topic most of the time, and I thank you, Mr Speaker, for recognizing that. I did bring that to the attention of the previous Speaker but I appreciate the fact that you brought them back to Bill 76; most of the time they were not on that particular bill.

1800

A healthy environment was mentioned, and I fully agree. A healthy environment is super-important to our society, to our culture, particularly for our own human health. The present act tends to block that opportunity. It blocks the opportunity to develop and find and identify proper landfill sites. What was really desperately needed wasn't to go through this process of trying to identify a proper landfill site. It was a horrendous exercise which did very little, if anything, to protect the environment. What we needed were tough standards to have the proper kind of liners and the proper kind of leachate collection system around these landfill sites, and that's exactly what we brought in a week ago today, the standards for those landfill sites.

This is really what the previous governments should have been doing to protect the environment. This government is a compassionate government, one that's going to see that the environment is protected, not going through a lot of exercises that have been suggested by the opposition, such as intervenor funding. I had one lawyer mention to me last summer that whatever we do as a government, don't get rid of intervenor funding. It's the best cash cow they've ever come across, and he was enjoying it thoroughly along with many other consultants.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for St Catharines, you have two minutes.

**Mr Bradley:** I wish in the two minutes I had a chance to respond to everything that was said this afternoon, but I'll get the last person first, the member for Northumberland, who launched an attack on intervenor funding.

I must say this is typical of the Conservative-Reform government we have in the province now, that you would attack that, because what that does is provide some kind of balance in the province. The big companies, the major corporations, can afford the best lawyers and they can afford the so-called scientific and technical experts. So you're quite content in this government to have the most powerful people and the richest people have their say at a hearing, but you're very reluctant to have those who aren't powerful and those who don't have the money have their say.

That's what intervenor funding did. You wanted those people to go out and have the bake sales and sell raffle tickets and so on. I can tell you that any of the major companies in this province didn't have to have a raffle to hire the best lawyers in the province. They always had the high-priced — I was going to say "blue-suited lawyers," but I just looked down and I'm wearing a blue suit — cut anyway, they had the best lawyers in the province, the best experts in the province and they used to run roughshod over anybody who was opposed to what they wanted.

Bill Davis said and the Conservative government said: "We're a practical group. We're not the Reform Party. We know there should be some element of fairness out there and we know the decision-making process will be much better if we have an opponent who is reasonably well-financed to appropriately critique what is going on. The ultimate decision that would be made is a better decision." But you and your government have decided to come down on the side of the rich and the powerful at the expense of those who are the least powerful and often the people with the fewest resources.

*Report continues in volume B.*



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# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Monday 24 June 1996

Lundi 24 juin 1996



Speaker  
Honourable Allan K. McLean

Président  
L'honorable Allan K. McLean

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 24 June 1996

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 24 juin 1996

*Report continued from volume A.*

1804

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND CONSULTATION IMPROVEMENT ACT, 1996

## LOI DE 1996 AMÉLIORANT LE PROCESSUS D'ÉVALUATION ENVIRONNEMENTALE ET DE CONSULTATION PUBLIQUE

Continuation of debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 76, An Act to improve environmental protection, increase accountability and enshrine public consultation in the Environmental Assessment Act / *Projet de loi 76, Loi visant à améliorer la protection de l'environnement, à accroître l'obligation de rendre des comptes et à intégrer la consultation publique à la Loi sur les évaluations environnementales.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Further debate?

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Through you to the member for Mississauga South, this now is my longer speech. I'm sure she'll be quite interested in what I have to say.

For the benefit of those here today who have not known me for a very long time, I have a rather lengthy involvement in the environmental movement. I take it the member for St Catharines will be carefully watching this speech on television. I do come to this debate with a small level of expertise and a fairly large commitment to environmental protection.

I'm going to start by talking directly to the facts of the Environmental Assessment Act and the changes being made to it. I would start by saying what I said during the process of Bill 20, the Planning Act, that the title should be changed. The title in this act as well, Bill 76, does not reflect what is happening with the changes in the new bill. It's entitled the Environmental Assessment and Consultation Improvement Act. This does not reflect the fact that the bill weakens the Environmental Assessment Act.

I don't know what the backbenchers in the government have been told. It sounds like they have been told — because the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale said, "Gee, these plans were being made while both the Liberal and the NDP were in government," and that we agreed with them then and we don't now.

That is not, in the case of the NDP government anyway, the correct fact. These are not changes we would have brought forward. When the NDP was in government, we did make some changes to the Environmental Assessment Act, but those changes did not limit public participation and did not weaken the act the way the Tory government has done.

I said in response to the environment minister's announcement on these changes that there was general agreement that there had to be some fine-tuning and updating of the Environmental Assessment Act. We had begun that process and we would have continued with that process.

The problem with the changes that have been made now is that at the end of the day what it fundamentally means, in very simple terms, is that there will be more pollution in our water and in our air and in our food and on our land.

I hear the Tory members, who seem to think I'm funny or that my speech is funny or that protecting the environment is funny or whatever. I would say to the members that a poll was conducted in 1995, and about 85%, I believe it was, of the people of Ontario believed that the government should maintain strong environmental regulations, that they did not believe in environmental deregulation when it came to protecting their health and the environment. That's very clear; when the polls were conducted, people made it clear.

The problem now is, most people have no idea what you're doing. It's happening right under people's noses: complete dismantlement of the environmental protection which the people of this province, including members of previous Tory governments, have been building up slowly but surely over the years in consultation with all the people of Ontario — not just with the business people, not just the developers, not just the people who own mines, not just the people who want to cut down trees, not just the people who want to make a quick buck, or legitimate people who are not out to make a quick buck, but the fewer the regulations, the easier it is for them, but with all the people of Ontario.

That's how we got to where we are today, through years, in some cases, of tough negotiations with industry, with the environmentalists at the table and with community groups at the table, with everybody at the table. MISA — as Mr Wildman, the member for Algoma, will remember, who was around at that time — took a long time, very strenuous and very difficult negotiations to come to agreements around the whole MISA.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** And goodwill on all sides.

**Ms Churley:** Yes, and goodwill on all sides. At the end of the day, some compromises were made. There is no doubt about it. When you negotiate, some compromises are made, but generally people felt comfortable with the end result. Now this government has weakened the MISA requirement.

Coming back to the Environmental Assessment Act, the minister tries to claim — and I know the members here have been told this in their briefing notes — that



there is indeed more public participation. There isn't. That's why the word "consultation" in the title of the bill gives the wrong impression.

The way the minister tries to explain why there's more consultation — with the changes that happen now, the consultation happens up front. The proponent will be required to sit down with the community — and let me add here that "community" is not yet defined. We also don't have the regulations around this yet, but even "community" is not defined. What does that mean? If somebody is proposing a garbage dump in a rural area or whatever, an incinerator in Riverdale, who's the community group? Is it the municipality's choice to reach out in the community and get people who are in favour of the landfill, who are generally more on their side? We don't even know who this community is.

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Coming back to my point, the minister says the community and the proponent have to sit down and reach agreement on terms of reference. That is when the public will have participation, but we don't know if the community groups who are opposed will have meaningful participation. I'm assuming there will be — I hope so — something in the regulations which requires real community input into those negotiations and discussions, but we don't know that yet.

That's the first step in this new process. The public can get involved, or some of the public can get involved, and sit down with the proponent and try to come up with reasonable but fully agreed-upon terms of reference.

When the minister was asked, what happens if the community people don't want a dump in their backyard and they can't reach agreement on terms of reference, he said that a mediator will be appointed. They will have to come to an agreement or the mediator will have to work out a solution. That is the very beginning of the process. We have no idea how long that will take because there are no time lines attached to this process.

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel):** Sure there are.

**Ms Churley:** No, there aren't. I say to the member for Dufferin-Peel that if he takes the act out — and I have a copy here if I can put it together; it's in pieces now — I can show him directly. It can't come to the ministry for review until an agreement is reached. What if a mediator is sent in and a mediator can't get the two to reach an agreement? How long is it going to take? We don't know. Is at some point the minister going to say, "You do have a time line"? She said no, if I recall correctly. The new time frames start once that agreement is made, not before.

As we well know in this place, siting a landfill or an incinerator is one of the most controversial issues. One of the things I agree with in terms of the minister's statement is that, unfortunately, siting landfills has perhaps taken up disproportionate time within the Ministry of Environment and Energy, but that is because it is so controversial. I know from experience in Riverdale many years ago that trying to site an incinerator is very controversial. People don't want it, for a variety of reasons which we all know about, and they fight like hell.

I don't know if that was parliamentary, Mr Speaker. If it wasn't, I will withdraw it. They fight, and they will

pull out all the stops. They put a lot of pressure on their local politicians from all levels of government and they want to have, at the very least, full participation throughout the whole process.

This is why siting landfills and incinerators dealing with solid waste is so difficult. It's just the way it is. Therefore the problem here is that I don't think it's going to solve the problem that the government set out to solve, which was to speed up the process. Once and if a mediator can resolve the differences, then the proposal is sent forward to the government for review and the time processes click in. However, the minister has more discretion than under the previous Environmental Assessment Act to make decisions, which is also a problem.

Another change to the act now is that the minister or the government can appoint civil servants to the Environmental Assessment Board. So there's more discretion within the minister's office for himself or herself, as the case may be, to make these decisions, to rule on these decisions.

The idea of having civil servants — whom I have a great deal of respect for, do not get me wrong. But the whole idea of the Environmental Assessment Board was to have experts from different areas of environment and law and environmental policy come together as independent bodies, totally unconnected to the government of the day, no matter who it might be, to make independent decisions.

Let's face it, particularly during a time when people's jobs are under siege, civil servants are going to be more concerned than ever, whether it's consciously or unconsciously, to not come up with a decision that will anger the minister. That tends to be a factor. I know right now that throughout the government there is a real chill. People don't know if they're going to have their jobs tomorrow. People are afraid. They're afraid to speak out, and not just civil servants, but people throughout the province who receive funding from the government are terrified to speak out.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Tilson:** What about Peterborough?

**Ms Churley:** They're bringing up the illegal strike in Peterborough, which I could go on about, Mr Speaker, but I think you would rule me out of order, wouldn't you? I'll come back to the environment.

The minister can then determine whether or not — she can say, "There are some things left out here and I want you to go back and work on this," but until there's an agreement, she doesn't look at it. So okay, it comes back and then a hearing may or may not be called. I'm going to remind everybody here, and recently, if I can find it — as you can see, I don't have one speech prepared here, so I'll probably have to wing this.

You'll recall that one of my Liberal colleagues asked the Premier a question about whether he agreed there should be full public environmental assessments for landfill dumps and the Premier said, "Yes, I do." Then, when these changes were announced by the minister, I asked her again, does she stand by that, and she said, "Yes, the changes to the Environmental Assessment Act will mean full environmental assessment." But in fact it doesn't mean necessarily full environmental assessment.



Furthermore, one of the other problems with this new process — let's review where we are to date. We don't know how long it's going to take to get to the stage where the time frames click in at the ministry. It could take a few months; I suppose it could take years. Who knows? But then the minister can decide whether it goes before a full environmental assessment. I asked, and I believe in this case it was ministry staff who briefed me, whether or not they would necessarily have to, if a full environmental assessment is requested, look at need for the undertaking and alternatives to the undertaking, which is the cornerstone of our environmental assessment.

I remember the Canadian Environmental Law Association and other environmental groups held a press conference here quite a few months ago, in 1995, expressing fears that the government was going to take the landfill, waste management, right out of the environmental assessment process and put it into part V of the Environmental Protection Act, which would have effectively eliminated having to look at the need and the alternatives to the undertaking.

I believe the Premier perhaps didn't like that idea, because he did speak up in the House and say he was not going to allow that to happen. I would really like to think that because he made that commitment, that's why at least that wasn't done, that it wasn't pulled right out of the Environmental Assessment Act into the Environmental Protection Act.

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The Environmental Assessment Act in Ontario is one of the strongest in the world and, as my colleague from St Catharines said, not everything that comes before the government is designated to the EA, but if it is, there's good reason for it to be designated. If it is, it's important that citizens have full access to that process and it's important that they get intervenor funding so that they can do independent studies.

Think about an environmental assessment on a landfill site or an incinerator: the complications, the very complex technical work that has to be done. I asked the question, "If there's no intervenor funding because this government has cancelled the intervenor funding project, then how are people going to risk" — because they won't know till the end whether they're going to be awarded costs or not — if they can find the money — and that's a big if too — "doing these independent studies?" Basically what the minister said is — or the minister's staff; I can't remember; I want to be clear on the record here who said it, but I believe it was the minister — "The proponent could pay the intervenor funding, but there's no requirement that they pay their intervenor funding." So the reality is that people, if it does go before a hearing, will not have the kinds of funds which are absolutely required to participate in a meaningful way in an environmental assessment.

If the proponent who stands to make millions of dollars in putting the landfill somewhere says, "Oh, trust us. We've got the best scientists over here to do this and we've got the best whatever here. Trust us," we have found from very sad experience how easy it is, unfortunately, in our system to find well-qualified people who can come up with really interesting answers on either side

of the fence. So it is absolutely crucial that if somebody's proposing to put a dump in your backyard or an incinerator in your backyard with all of the complicated, technical implications of that, there is intervenor funding so that the citizens will have real input.

When I go back to this "consultation" in the title, Consultation Improvement Act, people are going to be shut out of the process in a way which they weren't before.

Coming back to intervenor funding, which is an important component here: There was no need to cancel intervenor funding. It was up for review; maybe changes could have been made. We knew it was coming up for review and we were starting to look at how we could redesign it, but we wanted to make sure that it remained in place.

When you combine the changes made in this new act with the fact that people will not have access to intervenor funding, it is very, very clear that people will not have meaningful input. So you have to ask yourself, who benefits from this? You have to ask yourself, in every decision that's made by this government, who benefits? I'll tell you who benefits. The big business, the big land — I almost got back to the Planning Act here again and started to talk about the developers, because that's the same thing.

In that case, we had a new Planning Act which was basically written by developers for developers. The developers benefited. This is environmental, this is related because you have to look at the cumulative effect of all of this. It is horrendous when you add it all up.

But coming back to the Environmental Assessment Act, who benefits? The proponents. The big garbage dump owners. These are the people who benefit, and we all know there's big money in siting landfills.

One of the reasons the need for alternatives to the undertaking is extremely important in landfill hearings and incineration hearings is that we as a society determined some years ago that we had to find more environmentally friendly ways to deal with our garbage, that we had to stop thinking of garbage as garbage because, number one, it uses up our resources.

I grew up in Newfoundland; Labrador, to be precise. When I was growing up, both my grandfathers — I come from a long line of fisher people. For years and years, for generations, nobody ever dreamed that the fish in Newfoundland would disappear. It was just unheard of. The feeling was they'd be there forever. But the fish disappeared. It's a resource consumption issue, and we have to start thinking as a people.

There are different kinds of deficits. This government only talks about financial deficits, but if we don't start turning back some of these changes this government is making quickly — we won't see the results for a while. We'll see some of the results in our lifetime, but our grandchildren and their children will be seeing them and they'll be paying for them too. They will because we've seen in the past that the reason why regulations were built up over the years is because of what was happening to the environment. Now we have more evidence that it's not just the natural environment that's been affected — species disappearing, resources disappearing — but it's causing us health problems.



There is evidence — and I've been talking to the minister about this from time to time, to bring in a mandatory testing program — that about 800 people in the Metro area die because of smog every year, and that's very alarming. Incinerators, which would be affected by this new bill, would end up affecting our air quality, because even with the latest technology there are two problems. There are a lot of problems with incineration, but I'll talk about two of them for a moment.

It burns up resources that we can recycle and reuse. Under our government, after we banned incineration, the paper mills up north, many of them, spent millions of dollars to retrofit, to retool their plants so they could use recycled fibre. After this government said it was going to allow incineration again as an option, some representatives of those paper mills spoke out and said they were nervous about this decision because they were afraid of what it was going to do. They've invested a lot of money.

The reality is that incinerators today, even with the latest state-of-the-art technology, still emit pollutants. There is evidence now that there is no safe level for dioxin. I don't know if you know, but the very burning of materials in an incinerator creates dioxin. The dioxin is not there when you put it in, but it's the burning of plastics and other materials at a very high temperature. In incineration, you have to burn at a very steady, very high temperature at all times, which requires constant feeding and a particular mix of garbage.

#### *Interjection.*

**Ms Churley:** That's still the fact, I say to the member for Dufferin-Peel. Pollution is still created and there is no longer a safe level for dioxin. It is now believed that cancers are caused by certain of these chemicals, and dioxin is one of the deadliest pollutants known to human-kind. It is stored in the body; it has shown up in breast milk. If there is such a thing as any safe level, some of us have already reached that level. What's going to happen later on down the road? Even with new technology — and yes, the technology is better, there's no doubt about it — there are still pollutants and people are still affected by those. Tiny amounts of dioxin may have devastating effects on future generations as they build up in our food chains and our bodies. When we need to be doing everything we can to eliminate dioxins and other carcinogens from our environment, this government is turning back the clock and saying, "We're going to allow incineration again."

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If you have a proponent who wants to site an incinerator, and a garbage dump as well, at the very least people will want to know that there will be absolute, full environmental assessment with intervenor funding and with the requirement that the proponent has to look at alternatives to the site, alternatives to the undertaking and need. It is absolutely essential. Some people say: "Oh, that's too time-consuming. You can't make these people do that. It's too expensive." I agree that there needed to be more clarity in the Environmental Assessment Act. More clarity is really different from scoping it to the point where it effectively dilutes it, which is what happens here.

If you have proponents who want to build an incinerator — I asked this question — would they be required to look at alternatives? I was told that it depends on what line of business they are in, so I said more specifically: "When you're looking at building an incinerator and burning garbage, then you absolutely have to look at the alternatives, because you are competing for the same materials." Part of how we got to where we are now, and we still have a very long way to go, is by having hearings and proponents having to look at alternatives, partly because it's so hard to site landfills, and over time now, with incinerators being allowed again, it will be hard to site those — municipalities, governments, including the provincial government at one time, although this government has now cut funding for the blue box program and for energy conservation programs.

It's such a waste because we worked so hard for so many years to get to what is really still the toddler stage in this process and there is still so far to go. Very talented people worked on this at all levels of government, together with community groups and industry and environmentalists, to find new ways of dealing with our garbage so that we don't turn it all into one ugly, smelly, big mass of garbage and burn it or dump it or whatever. No doubt about it, landfills are not great for the environment, neither are incinerators, and the more we do on the three Rs, the better off we are as a society.

If you have a hearing for an incinerator, if the proponent is not in the business, I was told — and perhaps I misunderstood this; I stand to be corrected, but I am sure this is what I was told and this was my understanding — it will be up to the minister. If they are not also in the business of recycling, then they don't have to look at it, which means you could go through a hearing on siting an incinerator without looking at what they can do, the possibility of reusing and recycling in a more effective way materials that would be burned up in that incinerator. That is a big problem.

To come back to the hearing again, and I think this is a really important point — I don't know how many people here have been involved in the environmental process. We all hear the horror stories of how long that takes, but it can be extremely technical and sometimes needs to take a long time. I know that people don't want to hear this. Everything now is, "Let's speed it up and get it through as fast as we can."

There is a difference between dealing with and getting rid of duplication, getting rid of the parts that don't work any more and clarifying. One big problem that I often heard from environmental lawyers and others on both sides, the environmental side and lawyers for the proponent, is that, no doubt about it, there was not enough clarity in what was required of them — very frustrating. There's absolutely no problem with making that clearer.

But there is a problem of making very tight time frames for everything, no matter what it is. That's ridiculous. For simple cases, it would make sense, but it's totally ridiculous to presume that a very complex, highly technical — these days the requirement, which is good, for a double lining and the other kinds of technicalities of siting in a landfill are extremely complex, and sometimes people are surprised.



That's another problem, because their time frame — people have been involved at the front end of the process and the terms of reference are agreed to, and something pops up in the hearing that nobody ever thought of, somebody brings up a problem that just wasn't thought of. Then people have no access to bring that into the hearing because it's not part of the requirement. How do we deal with that?

I believe that in the name of efficiency you be as clear as you can, but you have to have some flexibility to deal with complications and the bigger, more technical problems that exist. You absolutely have to have a very clear process in place so that people have as much involvement as they require, so no matter what the decision is at the end of the day, at least people feel they had a say and a fair say, a legitimate say, meaningful participation, which is what's been shut out now.

Democracy does cost money from time to time. As I said earlier, siting garbage dumps is very difficult, and I know Conservatives who live in rural areas who want —

**Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues):** You know Conservatives?

**Ms Churley:** I do, actually. I even have some friends, but not the type of Conservatives who are here. I do know some who live in rural areas who, when we were in government, were concerned about their backyard possibly having a landfill, and these people told me that, boy, this is one case where they want the government to provide funding and input. They believe this is one area where government should invest so that they have full participation.

Obviously, they want to fight it as best they can, but, at the end of the day, with a clearer process, a fair process for everybody, at least when the decision is made, people feel — what's going to happen if there's a hearing and people don't have intervenor funding? They don't know if they're going to be awarded costs at the end. They'd feel they had to trust the scientists that the proponent appointed or hired to do this at great cost. These experts cost money, and they don't believe, they feel there's something wrong with these reports, that it just fits the proponent's needs a little too closely. How are they going to feel if that landfill is sited in their backyard and they're not confident their drinking water is not going to be affected adversely?

At least I would think that if you're going to build a landfill in somebody's backyard, they're not going to be happy about it, nobody's going to be happy about it, but the more the government and the proponent can do to make people feel comfortable that their drinking water will be safe — and odour control, all the other things that come into it. If that's not guaranteed and people don't have confidence in the process, have confidence in the experts who are hired, have confidence their point of view was really taken into account and the kind of testing they might want, that proponents don't think is relevant but it's done anyway because they want to feel very comfortable if it's going to end up in their backyard, that would be a very big problem and that's another problem with this new act.

I want to speak for a few minutes about another aspect, and that is the harmonization if a proponent wants to

build a landfill or do anything that could adversely affect the environment and it crosses jurisdictions. This was done in the name of getting rid of duplication, and it also comes into effect if a federal environmental assessment is required. But it seems to me, from what I've seen of this, that the intent of the government is to reduce standards to the lowest common denominator, which is a really big problem.

**1840**

We should be very proud of the fact that we have some of the strongest environmental protection in Canada. The Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, for instance, does not require the things I talked about earlier — that is, need and alternatives — which are a vital part of some of these complicated undertakings.

I see that the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale is still here. When the member for St Catharines was speaking, I heard him say a couple of times, "You just want more bureaucracy." "Bureaucracy" now seems to be becoming a buzzword for this government to use when it wants to convince people that the laying off it's doing, the downsizing, the restructuring to save money for its tax cut and to deregulate so that people can build things a lot —

*Interjections.*

**Ms Churley:** I'm telling the truth here; I really am. This is what's going on. It's just the reality; that's what's happening. You talk about bureaucrats and it sets up this image — and I've never seen many of these kind of bureaucrats — of little people wearing glasses and hunched over desks, like some of the people in here right now at their desks. Little people with their glasses on hunched over their desks doing something, but nobody knows what. What is it they're doing? That's not what we're talking about here.

I could have spent all of my time, but I still have quite a bit of time left, so I'm going to tell you about some of the people we're talking about laying off in the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Natural Resources. They're not bureaucrats, and may I say that bureaucrats in the traditional sense are essential to getting things done as well. I believe, like we all do, that there had to be some downsizing throughout.

But bureaucrats are not the inspectors. We're talking about people who go out and inspect our food and inspect our water and do the tests and enforce compliance and pore over the environmental assessments and make sure that everything is there, all the information they need. That just skims the surface of what we're talking about here. Many of these people are being let go, and the member for St Catharines was talking about that earlier, about one of the foremost experts on acid rain — just gone; don't need him any more. It's ridiculous.

I have some information here and I'm going to tell you about some of the layoffs. Maybe you're not aware of it, but if you look down the lists, which scan pages — I expect there are some environmental staff sitting over there listening to me and I'm sure they're writing little notes for the parliamentary assistant if there's some technical thing I've got wrong. That's fine; if I've got something technically wrong, I'm happy to be informed of that. I don't think I have; I've got it all right so far, except maybe I'm wrong on some of the technical things. This is what is happening here.



I've been around this kind of thing for many years and I know it a little bit. I'm no expert, but I know it enough to understand what's happening here. I personally am devastated by the deregulation and the cuts that are going on and continue to go on and these changes that are absolutely destroying our environment over time.

Let me come back to some of the cuts that have been made or will be made. This is the 1995-96 fiscal year, MOEE, operating 1995-96 budget reductions announced October 6, 1995.

Reduce environmental research grants —

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I wonder if we could get on topic. We're really debating Bill 76. We've been all over the map, from cuts to dear knows what else. We're really debating Bill 76, please.

**Interjection:** He's right.

**Ms Churley:** No, he's not.

**The Acting Speaker:** That is not a point of order. The member for Riverdale.

**Ms Churley:** Mr Speaker, I'd like to inform you that I think the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Environment and Energy's attempted point of order demonstrates how little he understands what's going on here, because this is all connected to the Environmental Assessment Act. All these things have a cumulative impact on our environment, and this is one of the areas where this government is going wrong. They're taking it piece by piece and not looking at it all in one big package.

Mr Speaker, I don't know how much you know about environmental protection, but I can assure you that this is connected because of the cumulative effects. The changes to the Environmental Assessment Act, combined with a lot of these cuts and changes, are going to have a devastating impact on our environment. This government is deregulating, laying off good people who have the technical expertise, who know what they're doing, who know how to protect the environment.

I know when we were the government we had a hard time getting all of the technical work and the inspections and the compliance work done because there weren't enough of them. We were trying to deal with that and find ways to make sure it was done, and what does this government do but come in and lay them off. Don't you tell me that I don't know what I'm talking about and that this is not connected. It is very connected.

The reduction of the environmental research grants: We have to have, in a society like this and this age of technology, this age when we're trying to further our goals in environmental protection, new ways to have sustainable development. Without that, we're going to fall way behind. We have been on the forefront for so many years in terms of new environmental technology which creates jobs and protects the environment. We're not going to have that any more.

Reduce environmental monitoring analytical: What does that tell you? Does that sound like bureaucrats sitting hunched over little desks doing nothing important? I don't think so.

Testing and standards development: What does that tell you? We want to have testing, we want to have stan-

dards, we need them for the environmental assessment process. These are all relevant to the environmental process. We need people who are able to sit down and work with the communities, work with environmentalists, work with industry in the way we used to years ago to find ways to compromise but to come up with a package, to come up with the kind of standards and testing that protect human health and our natural environment and yes, other species.

Downsize boards and committees: I know this government doesn't like boards and committees. They don't like to take advice. They think they know it all and they've gotten rid of a lot of boards and committees, but I'll put that in the category. At least it's not people out there doing the testing and the monitoring. In my view, they're very important because they offer very important advice to the government, but that's part of a general pattern throughout this government.

Reduce municipal recycling support: This is a real tragedy, especially at a time when the government is bringing back incineration. People like the blue box, and that too is very much a part of the Environmental Assessment Act, in case people are worried that there's no connection here. As I said before, we were making advancements over the years and finding new, more environmentally sound ways to deal with our garbage. Now we're going to go back to —

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: There is no quorum in the House.

**The Acting Speaker:** Would you please verify if there is a quorum?

**Acting Clerk Assistant (Ms Lisa Freedman):** A quorum is not present.

*The acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

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**Acting Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Riverdale.

**Ms Churley:** Mr Speaker, I believe I was in the process of telling you why the reduction of the funding for blue box and recycling support is so relevant to the Environmental Assessment Act. It's crucial when we're looking at landfills or incinerators that we always look at more environmentally sound ways of dealing with our garbage rather than just throwing it in a great big incinerator.

Sure, you can create energy these days; that's one of the big selling points of incinerators. But I think it's fundamentally wrong to waste our resources that way and produce pollution at the same time when we should be doing absolutely everything we can, in a non-partisan way I would say, in trying to find better ways to deal with garbage, because it has been such an incredible problem and a plague for governments and communities for so long. There are all kinds of new technologies, as I mentioned earlier, but we're firing people who have information about those.

Anyway, reduced funding for the blue box, reduced energy conservation grants, reduced conservation and planning spending, reduced regional operations program delivery spending, redesigned compensation for emergency response program; well, I can tell you what "rede-



signed" means. It's a code word for reduced. Sunset Ontario Waste Management Corp without any new plans whatsoever for hazardous waste brought in. Of course, it was time to do something about the OWMC, we all agree, but this government cancelled our past government's plans to proceed with new ways to deal with hazardous wastes. That's all stopped.

Then the total 1995-96 operating budget, MOEE capital budget reductions, reduced municipal assistance program, the Ontario Clean Water Agency; I'm going to dwell on that for a minute because I think we're going to have to have some serious public consultations about what's happening to the protection of our drinking water. If there's anything more fundamental — I guess the air we breathe — but our drinking water. Reducing the municipal assistance program, otherwise known as MAP, is absolutely unbelievable.

I remember recently, and we'll all remember, that in this House we heard about cryptosporidium in the water in Collingwood. The minister said there was no proof that it was caused by the agricultural runoff, but what we found out is that the commissioner of the environment said there was a request for a review of that very same issue — obviously people were worried about it — and it was turned down.

We know that our drinking water can be vulnerable to this. You'll recall that a person died. I know that people die from smog. It costs our health system about \$1 billion a year. Not a whole lot of people, we'll all agree, have died from this, but it's scary to think that we know it's out there and that the minister refused to do a review. The government has said it won't do anything about it, and one of the things it did was cancel the Clean Up Rural Beaches program. That was a program that helped farmers in rural communities protect water supplies from the agricultural runoff that I mentioned earlier that is the suspected cause of cryptosporidium. I believe that program should be brought back.

The other thing that's happened, as I mentioned earlier, is that the minister has cancelled all new funding for MAP. They're not even taking any new applications. That means funding is being cancelled for water and sewage projects. We know that municipalities in many cases, especially the smaller ones, are not going to be able to undertake the necessary changes to the water systems. They don't have the funds because, if you'll recall, this government also drastically cut, almost in half, the transfer payments. This means there's going to be a bigger risk to people's health.

We know that we need filtration systems in about 40 most vulnerable communities. Who's going to pay for it? What's going to happen in the meantime? I really urge the government to bring back this funding, because we're talking about one of the most fundamental things we rely on in life, that is, clean drinking water.

The cuts go on. That was 1995-96, and now we're into 1996-97 reductions. That's when the complete elimination of the three Rs — recycling disappears; there's no plan in place. I guess this government wants people to throw it all in incinerators or landfills. They'll eliminate municipal landfill waste facility assistance; eliminate municipal household hazardous waste funding; eliminate miscel-

laneous waste grants to municipalities; eliminate the urban beaches restoration; eliminate the rural beach cleanup, which I've mentioned; eliminate the green communities program, which is an energy-saving program; eliminate home green-up programs, part of energy conservation which, incidentally, create lots of jobs and spinoff benefits for the economy as well.

Those are just some of the cuts we're talking about here. Oh, there's a few more that I should mention. We're not talking about faceless bureaucrats; we're talking about people who actively are protecting our environment, our food, our air, our water. "Eliminate energy education and training; eliminate energy standards development; eliminate institutional, residential and community energy management programs; eliminate public education grants and support to" — again, I'm just reading. I know it is important to keep these in place, but these are things the government wants to get rid of, any grants that help educate people or non-governmental organizations who perhaps know more about the environment and in fact are very useful for a Minister of Environment.

Coming back to the EA act specifically, you sometimes need to have outside groups who know the issues, who can mobilize the community, who can create enough of a momentum and a demand overall in the community that it forces the government to act or a minister to really push her position on protection of the environment within a climate like this, where cutting and deregulation is the norm.

I would say to the Minister of Environment and to the parliamentary assistant that if there are certain things they'd like to try to get through this government, having these environmental groups out there doing the work, giving the government the kind of push it needs in some cases, to justify — because they find out people really want it. One of the problems with the changes to the Environmental Assessment Act and all the cuts I'm talking about, and I haven't even finished the list and I haven't started in natural resources, is that it's too much, and every other ministry is making all kinds of cuts and deregulating. People don't know what this all means. They don't even know it's happening.

In the report of environmental commissioner which just came out, one of the problems she raised is that more and more important environmental decisions are being made at the cabinet level, changes in regulations. People don't even know about it unless it's somebody very specifically involved in that area.

*Interjection.*

**Ms Churley:** Yes, it's going on the environmental registry — for 30 days in July. It's very complex; most people don't understand environmental assessment, but people sure care about what it means to them. People are on holidays. What the government is doing is that there's a minimum requirement in the act for the registration of changes that have environmental impacts. It's minimum; it's 30 days. What this government is doing is using 30 days as the minimum for everything. When you've got something very complex like the Environmental Assessment Act, people need more time than that; they need a lot more time than that. Why not put it on the registry now and give people some time in September?



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I do believe we are going to be having hearings, I'm pleased to tell you. I guess the parliamentary assistant, the member for Northumberland, and I and some others will be travelling around the province talking to people about the implications of these, and I'm sure some interesting questions will be asked. And because the government also hasn't really consulted with many environmental groups on any of its deregulation, the so-called red tape review, it will give people an opportunity to let them know how they feel about the absolutely cumulative effects. People will come, and as much as the government members would like us to stick very specifically and technically to the Environmental Assessment Act, these things are all cumulative, all go together, so it will give people the opportunity to speak of the fears and concerns they have about the deregulation and the cuts taking place.

I read some of the cuts. There's more, but that gives you a general idea when you start putting them all together. Then there are the cuts and deregulations in the Ministry of Natural Resources, and a lot of those affect the protection of the environment, the protection of our parks, the protection of other species. Conservation authorities, as you know, have been significantly cut. There's a reduction to the Great Lakes management program; reduction in policy and planning activities; reduction in science and information resource activities. I'm trying to find those that specifically relate to the environment because I want to stay on the subject. There are a lot of things in here about cuts to fire programs and that kind of thing, but I guess you would rule me out of order if I got into those, Mr Speaker, so I won't. It says they're streamlining forest management activity.

Doesn't it feel weird, Mr Speaker, when you're a part of the government and somebody is speaking straight to you and saying, "Your government is doing all these awful things," and you have to remain neutral? When I sit there as the acting Speaker and the government side of the House is yelling and screaming and saying, "Madam Speaker, what the NDP government did is just" — and I sit there. You're doing a very good job of — you're nodding. You must agree with me. They do that to me too.

This is what I was getting at: With the cumulative effect of all of this, I'm very worried —

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** The brightest Speaker we've ever had.

**Ms Churley:** He's a good Speaker. I should say that we have the member for High Park-Swansea in the chair. He's got a lovely tie on today. I think he does a very good job as the Speaker, actually.

**Mr Chris Stockwell (Etobicoke West):** He sure does. I'll have a double scoop of vanilla.

**Ms Churley:** Oh, no. The member for Etobicoke West is back, Mr Speaker. You have your work cut out for you now. The member for Etobicoke-Rexdale is not bad. You're always the topic, member for Etobicoke West. Somehow or other we all get back to you.

**Mr Stockwell:** I'll wait. I've got no choice.

**Ms Churley:** That's true. He has no choice.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Derwyn Shea):** Order.

**Ms Churley:** I guess I'd better start getting back to my notes. I notice I'm sort of running out of time — I've got less than 30 minutes left — so I have to scope my notes.

Seriously, coming back — after speaking for this long you have to lighten up a bit for a few minutes and have a little drink of water — we should be proud, all members of this House, and the Tory members should be very proud because the original Environmental Assessment Act was brought in under a Tory government. We were one of the first jurisdictions in Canada to implement an environmental assessment process. I've said it's not without fault. It's very hard to come up with a process that works for everybody, especially in controversial issues like landfills where you have two very distinct sides — three, in a way. You've got the municipality, which wants the landfill — it needs it; you've got to deal with the garbage — you've got citizens who don't want it, and you've got a proponent who really wants it to make a lot of money. You've got that situation and, yes, it's complicated and, as I said, it's not without fault. But it's the most —

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore is not in his seat. Will members please come to order. The member for Riverdale, if you'd be good enough to continue.

**Ms Churley:** Mr Speaker, thank you very much. I don't know if it's done any good, but let's attempt this again.

I want to come back to the fact that it's not without fault, but I'm proud of it and we should all be proud of the fact that we have the most stringent environmental assessment process in the world. What we are doing here is watering that down, and that doesn't make sense.

Just very recently, as I said earlier, the environment commissioner —

*Interjections.*

**Ms Churley:** Mr Speaker, you can listen to me anyway; ignore them. The environment commissioner gave a report on the — not their record, because I came up with a report card on the government's record on the environment some time ago, you may recall, and not surprisingly the government got an F on every aspect in terms of protection of our land, air and water. But what is more interesting to me are polls which have been done which show that people want environmental protection. I would say to the government members, people want their government to protect their environment.

I have here — and I'm not going to hold it up because I don't think that's allowed, but I'm going to read from it briefly. The member for St Catharines referred to this, and I would think the government would pay attention to this. This is from a Time magazine article, March 4, 1996. This is on the Republican Party and our friend Newt in the United States. I'm glad to see that the member for Mississauga South is about to take the Chair. There'll be order in the place now, for sure.

This article in Time — just listen to this a moment, and listen carefully.

*Interjections.*

**Ms Churley:** I'm talking to specific people. I've got your attention. Okay, listen to this. There's a picture of



Newt here and it says: "Last year the Republican freshmen rolled into Washington toting the Contract with America" — it's duplicated, hard to read — "and vowing to dilute and roll back decades of laws and regulations including those aimed at ensuring clean air, clean water and unsullied wilderness areas. But because they misread popular sentiment on the environment, they took a beating in the polls on this issue. Now as many as 91 House Republicans are voting with the Democrats on environmental measures. Shortly after the House reconvenes this week, Speaker Newt Gingrich is expected to announce the formation of a task force to review the Republican approach to the environment. He says the party mishandled the matter last year."

**Mr Ramsay:** So there.

**Ms Churley:** So there indeed. I believe you should take note of this. What Newt wanted to do is pretty much what you are doing, and when people catch up to what you are doing, you are going to be taken aback and you are going to be scrambling to try to bring back and find perhaps different ways. Perhaps we'll find that once you dismantle, it's very hard to build up again.

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A sampling last fall by a Republican pollster revealed that 55% of voters do not trust their party to protect the environment, which prompted her to note, "Our party is out of sync with mainstream American opinion." I'm reading this partly because I know this government is very interested in what the Americans are doing. They're looking to America for the lowest standards. "Wherever there are lower standards, boy, let's look to them. They're doing it right. Let's do what they're doing. Let's lower our standards to meet their standards."

What this story is telling you is that people — and perhaps in some cases in some of those areas people do support deregulation. But it's very, very clear that in terms of the environment, people, Republicans in the United States, did not support deregulation and the government pulling out from protecting the environment.

So, Mr Speaker —

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs Margaret Marland):** Madam Speaker.

**Ms Churley:** Madam Speaker. I apologize. It happens to me all the time; now I find myself doing it.

We were aware for some time that this government was going to be making changes to the Environmental Assessment Act, and what was very disappointing to me is that people from the environmental groups and the communities who have concerns about this were not consulted with in a meaningful way. It is abundantly clear that these changes that are being proposed benefit the people who want to build large landfills and incinerators to the detriment of the citizens who are worried about having dumps and incinerators in their backyard.

There is a chance, after reading the poll and the story about the Republicans in the United States, that the government could reverse some of the aspects of this bill. There will, I'm sure, be people coming to talk about some of the things that I've talked about today: that they're afraid of being cut out of the process, that they're not going to be able to hire experts and they're not going to be able to have meaningful participation. I can assure

you that people who are concerned — I guess Peel might be one of those areas, King township, all kinds of possible sites that came up when we were the government. I would say to them that with this process they have a much bigger fear than they had under our government, because this government is not giving them the same input into the process and is not allowing intervenor funding so that they can have proper participation.

**Mr Tilson:** Stop talking about the wonderful things you did, because you didn't do wonderful things. Your environmental policies were a disgrace.

**Ms Churley:** I'm talking about what this government is doing. It's like two little kids fighting in the backyard: "Well, you did that, so it doesn't matter what we're doing as a government because, gee, you guys were bad. It doesn't matter, because you did something wrong," in your view. That's ridiculous. You are the government. Madam Speaker, when are they going to start taking responsibility for that? How long are they going to be able to keep blaming us for everything they're doing? "Oh, well, you did that" or "It's all your fault. We're trying to clean up the mess you and the Liberals made over the last 10 years." Of course you ignore the 40 years before that. The mess that they talk about was created in the past 10 years. Forty years of Conservative rule, in their view, were absolutely perfect.

Compared to the kinds of deregulation in the environment that this government is doing, and I'm speaking specifically to the environment, it makes Bill Davis and other Tory premiers look really good. I believe there are many people from the Tory Party who are very upset at this government and what it's doing in the environment.

**Mr Stockwell:** Name one.

**Ms Churley:** I can name more than one. You know, it sounds as though members of this government tend to think that all Conservatives support them. I'd wonder if not one person, a known Conservative, has ever talked to any of you about concerns about some environmental deregulation or cuts. It shows how out of touch you are.

That's very alarming, that Conservative members in this House can say that, with all these cuts and all this deregulation, which will hurt human health, which will put us behind in advancement in new sustainable development technology. We were starting to make huge inroads. It created employment. The government was asked to review the cryptosporidium problem before it showed up in Collingwood and wouldn't do it, and won't bring back the Clean Up Rural Beaches program or the MAP funding. And they haven't heard a word, not one? Where have you been? At the Albany Club all the time? They don't hear anything.

There are some issues that we share concern about in terms of protecting the environment, and we've talked about some of them. I would say that the member for Mississauga South, and she can't participate in this debate at the moment, has heard from Conservatives who have concerns about some of the —

**Mr Stockwell:** Name one.

**Mr Churley:** When she's out of the chair, you can speak to Madam Speaker. I wish she were the Minister of Environment. Between the member for St Catharines and myself, we were complimenting her so much today that



the Premier is going to get worried about her and think there's something amiss if we think she's so great. Now, I'm just putting this in perspective. Compared to the rest of you over there — and that includes the parliamentary assistant; no personal offence — when it comes to the environment, out of everybody I know over there, it's the member for Mississauga South who has any knowledge of what you're doing, who has any understanding of the need for environmental regulation.

I was so proud and happy when I brought forward my private member's bill on the recommendation of the special report which Ruth Grier, when she was Minister of Health in our government, commissioned on preventing cancer. There were many recommendations in that report. By the way, one of them was around air quality.

I'm sure you were all listening very intently, I'm sure Madam Speaker was when I was saying earlier that it's believed there is no safe level any more for dioxins in our bodies, and the carcinogens. There are immune deficiencies, reproductive problems, cancers, all kinds of problems that scientists are now seeing emerge and they are recommending — and sure, there's debate in the scientific community. I rest my case when I was talking earlier that you can find experts on any side of any issue; industry is pretty good at finding experts who'll tell them what they want to hear. Yes, there are people who don't agree, scientists who don't agree, but we have to err on the side of caution in this.

When we're thinking about breast cancer increasing, and other cancers, reproductive systems being affected and immune systems, I don't know about you, but part of this is really personal because we've all had family members or friends or connections to people who have been very sick or died of breast cancer or other cancers. It's very hard to deal with and the human pain and suffering is indescribable. I personally have not gone through that, but I've been close to people who have.

If there's even any proof, as there is today — there are so many man-made chemicals out there now, we don't know what most of them do. I come back to the cumulative effect and the environmental assessment. Every time a landfill or incineration proposal comes forward, we have to be looking at these kinds of things. We have to be asking, even if it's a tiny, tiny part — parts per million; that's the way we talk about these chemicals, these tiny, tiny parts. If there is, as there is, evidence that our bodies cannot accommodate dioxin, and we've already got some stored in our bodies, we shouldn't be building new incinerators. We have to be looking at that under an environmental assessment. We have to be looking at the cumulative effects of what else is in the area, and the plume from a smokestack spreads for miles and falls into our waterway and into our food chain.

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These are very serious issues. I have, as many of you know, and I believe I share this in common with you, Madam Speaker, a grandson who's two years old. Many of us here have children and/or grandchildren. I do worry about his future. There are many deficits, as I talked about earlier, many, many deficits. I worry about what the world is going to be like when he grows up. I worry because there seems to be evidence that future gener-

ations, who have been by now — I believe that man-made chemicals started to come into our environment in about the 1940s, and there's just more and more and more added every year. People who were born at that time, when they first started to come into the world, were not really affected by those, but then our mothers had more of these chemicals stored in fat tissue and in breast milk. Studies have shown that younger children, and a lot of these studies have been done on animals, are being affected in a way that the older generation isn't.

That's pretty scary to me, and I would think that it would be pretty scary to anybody in this place and anywhere else who has children or grandchildren. I would expect that we would want to err on the side of caution when we're looking at how we deal with our waste disposal problems, because it is part and parcel of the air quality problems that we have. It does contribute.

Another aspect of incineration is that ironically, in a way, the better the pollution abatement equipment is, the more advanced it is — and of course, what pollution abatement equipment does is trap; it's designed to trap as much of the pollutants and contaminants as possible. What happens to that? Some of it's still going up the stack; it's impossible to catch it all, but you catch an awful lot of it with the latest technology. Of course, the more you capture the more hazardous that waste is, and that waste has to be landfilled. So that gets you into a whole other area of what to do with the hazardous waste that's coming from the — I suppose they don't call them baghouses any more, but that's what they used to be called.

There are various kinds of pollution abatement equipment, and today it's technically very advanced, so you've got some dioxins and other carcinogens going up the stack and spreading around, and remember, our bodies can't handle very much of that stuff. The rest of it has to be dealt with. Put it this way: You can have a landfill without incineration, but you cannot have incineration without landfill. That's a fact. So all of that would have to be looked at, and again that gets very complex.

How do you define the standards around what is considered hazardous and what is considered non-hazardous and can be buried in a normal landfill? That is a very, very big component of siting an incinerator. So besides looking at the three Rs and the alternative to incineration, you have to go through all the very complicated technicalities of what to do with the hazardous waste and to define what exactly is hazardous waste.

Madam Speaker, I'm sure everybody is extremely relieved to know that I've only got nine minutes left. I must admit I am getting —

**Mr Tilson:** You can do it.

**Ms Churley:** I'm sure you all learned a lot today. I yelled a lot at the convention over the weekend, and although my preferred candidate didn't win — I yelled a lot for my candidate and she didn't win but, you know, it's democracy — I do want to sincerely congratulate the new leader of our party. I know that he has a big commitment to environmental protection, and since we've been here in opposition, we've worked very closely on some of the natural resources issues.

**Mr Stockwell:** Everybody is.



**Ms Churley:** Not everybody is interested in the environment. I know that. To a lot of people: "Oh, it's those environmentalists again. They're going to bore us with all this talk about protecting the environment and other species. They're nuts, they're special-interest. Who cares what they have to say?"

But environmentalists, people who speak up for protecting the environment, are not what I would call a special interest. It is a special interest: The special interest is protecting humankind all across the earth, if that's what you call crazy, a special interest that you don't want to listen to.

I'm afraid that's what this government is doing. They do not want to talk to and hear from environmentalists who have years and years and years of expertise and experience in this area, who could be helping the government come up with new ways if they want to save money for doing these things.

But this government does not consult with the very people who have real expertise and real concern about protection of the environment. They don't consult with them; they see them as crazies, just a pain in the neck. "Let's find ways to get them out of here. We don't want to hear them, because they'll tell us stuff we don't want to hear. They're just troublemakers."

What this government is all about is finding ways to save money for a 30% tax cut that's going to mainly benefit the richest in our society, and that is a fact, that is an absolute fact, and our environmental protection, all of those layoffs, downsizing that's happening, both in the Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Natural Resources, which is going to have extreme adverse effects on our environment and on human health, is being done partly to finance a tax cut, when polls show that people want their government to protect the environment. This government is absolutely getting out of the business of protecting our environment, and that is a fact.

I read out pages and pages of cuts and deregulations. They haven't even finished yet, they've just begun, and it's already a litany of directed tax on our air and our water and our food and our land. It's all happened, and there's more to come. The so-called red tape commission has just scratched the surface of that.

All they want to do is find ways to allow their friends to be able to develop as quickly as they can. They're having miners take over the mining industry. They're having people who own the forest companies in charge of replanting and managing the forests. It's ridiculous, and that just scratches the surface.

So what do we have before us today? We have this Environmental Assessment and Consultation Improvement Act. The government should at least be honest. What they do with every bill they've come up with so far, and I sat in on the Planning Act, with every bill they come up with these bogus titles to fool people. It sounds so good: the Environmental Assessment and Consultation Improvement Act.

This does not even achieve what it is they said they wanted to do in the first place. They're fooling people. They're going to scope the actual environmental assessment technical process, but the consultation part is at the front end, and force people to sit down with propon-

ents — people who don't want a dump in their backyard are very worried about it — to come to agreement on terms of reference.

No time frame on that. The minister at some point can step in and say, "Okay, we're not getting anywhere. You can't get anywhere. Appoint a mediator." We don't know how long that's going to take. What if they don't agree? What if citizens who are concerned about it in their backyard aren't part of this so-called citizens' group?

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There are a lot of environmental groups, and before I finish, I do want to pay tribute to them. I did not do them justice today. I have to confess that I didn't write this speech — you may have gathered that — and I have lots of paper from lots of different people, and every time I try to find them, I seem to have found something else.

There are groups out there who are doing very fine work, and I would urge the government to consult with them more widely and to take their advice and to include them in the process. At the end of the day we will have a better process, and industry — I know they don't like a lot of regulations, but they sure do like clarity and they like to know that what's in place is going to — continuity, I guess, is what I'm trying to say.

This is so extreme, what this government is doing, that they must know another government — I can guarantee you that if this party is re-elected it's going to change again. You've gone too far. It will have to, because the environment is no longer being protected. It will become a campaign issue, I can guarantee you, in a very big way.

There's a new group. It's a neat group. They're a bunch of university students in environmental studies, in environmental law, from York, from the University of Toronto, from I believe Guelph and other universities. They've pretty well pulled together on their own and started this group called Stop Environmental Deregulation in Canada. I'm sure the government members would be pleased to know that the federal Liberals are included in this as well. They have grave concerns about the deregulation and cuts that are happening. They have held a couple of press conferences, and they're trying to get the word out that the deregulation that's happening in this province is very, very serious, and we have to, as communities, stop. Their symbol, I believe, is a stop sign.

I'm very proud of these young people, because today the environment is not in vogue. I know that. People are worried about jobs and cuts and where their next paycheck or their next meal is going to come from. There are so many worries. I congratulate these students for coming together to try to alert the public about what's happening.

Then there's the Canadian Environmental Law Association, a long-standing group with outstanding people working for them, who do a lot of research and in the past have been instrumental in helping government and working with industry and others to come up with a lot of the regulations we have today.

Of course everybody has heard of Pollution Probe. They've been around and have gone through many changes over the years, and they recently have been really instrumental in pushing forward the smog issue and the need for mandatory car exhaust testing.



And there's the Environmental Defense Fund. There are all kinds of groups that I don't have time to mention now, but I would like to thank them for their input and their continuing concern about the environment and what this government is doing. I would urge them to get involved in the hearings — I'm sure they will — and bring their expertise to the government and work hard to convince this government that the deregulation and the cutting are going to harm human health and leave a huge deficit for our children.

There is still a chance to make changes to this environmental assessment program, and I urge the government to pay attention to the environmental groups who know the issue.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr Stockwell:** I have two minutes to comment on that brief interlude brought to us by the member for Riverdale. There's a problem with the member for Riverdale: Her past voting record and her conviction today don't seem to equate. She was part of a government — that environmentally sensitive crowd of socialists who bombarded this place from 1990 to 1995 — that abolished 34 separate acts so they could put lifts on Keele Valley and Britannia. You might ask yourselves in this place, this environmentally sensitive, environmentally conscious individual, how long were the public hearings on that? No, they didn't exist, not one second of public hearings. How long was the environmental assessment hearing? Not even one second — didn't exist. They put the lift on it. How big was this landfill site? It's the biggest site in North America. How many times did we debate it in this place? Try never. How many people were affected by this? Millions of people in the GTA were dealing with the garbage dump that was out there. How many contracts did they abrogate? At least half a dozen.

This from the environmentally conscious NDP, from the member for Riverdale, who has the temerity to stand in this place and question anybody's commitment to the environment after your government did the unthinkable: It expanded two landfill sites with not one second of public hearing, not one second of environmental assessment, and to do that it simply obliterated 34 separate acts that were put in place to protect the environment.

Pardon me, as the member for Riverdale pontificates from the highest soapbox, if I suggest that you should probably fall off that soapbox, because your commitment to the environment is worth exactly nothing — political expediency. You gave two raises on landfill sites without a second of public hearing. I don't need lectures from you.

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** Madam Speaker, let me join the many commendations you are receiving for having achieved that long-sought-after tenure. We're well officiated today, and I commend you.

The member for Riverdale speaks to the issue and reminds us that an opportunity was given to the government to continue and to enhance. The government chose expediency and put the civil service and the ministry, along with others, under a state of siege, commissioned them to come up with a scheme, made of them conjurors of illusion, gutted the Ministry of Environment. For all intents and purposes, to a large extent it has ceased to

exist. For a fistful, a handful of votes they keep trying on the one hand to threaten job creation with red tape. They play fundamental environmental issues: trade threatened with jobs. They write a ticket and hope the public picks it.

They use words such as "socialists." I tell you what: We have just listened to the reminder, the good, sensitive, committed message from the member for Riverdale, and every day I will take a committed socialist as opposed to a critic who goes back, revisits the past, grabs a club, a capitalist without capital. I'm impressed.

**Mr Tilson:** A few comments with respect to the member for Riverdale. This morning we read in the Toronto Star, of all papers, "Hampton Vows to Bury NDP Past," and there's no doubt about it: If you look at what your policies were with the policies of Ruth Grier, you're going to change all that.

I assume tomorrow we're going to have "Churley Vows to Bury NDP Past," because what you're saying today and what your government said between 1990 and whenever you left office a year ago — you're not saying the same things.

Let me repeat to you what Ruth Grier said back in 1992 and question how close it is to Bill 76. This is Ruth Grier's press release:

"Reforms are now under way to improve service to the public in four program areas: environmental assessment, land use planning reviews, certificates of approval and waste management approvals, Environment Minister Ruth Grier announced today.

"These reforms will help get good projects under way while preserving the highest standard of environmental protection," Mrs Grier told the Legislature. "We have to ensure that these laws work efficiently, effectively and fairly. This is particularly important in difficult economic times."

"There are three major objectives in environmental assessment reform: clearer direction to proponents and the public on what is expected of them in the EA process; completing the review of individual EA documents in one third of the time that it takes today; and reducing the time of the entire EA process by one half when there is no hearing." No hearing: This is what you people were proposing back in 1992.

"This will involve written guidelines for applicants, deadlines for document reviews, a standard review format and concurrent government agency and public review of selected EA documents on a trial basis."

And finally, deadlines for document reviews. Ask yourself what's going on. Get in touch.

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**Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent):** I want to thank the member for Lake Nipigon and the member for Dufferin-Peel for jumping up after the member for Etobicoke West. He's such a hard act to follow. I'm glad they chose to do that rather than I.

To the member for Riverdale, I want to compliment her and tell her how much I appreciate her passion for the environment. I didn't know she had such passion for the environment, but I assume if you can talk for 90 minutes on it, obviously it means a great deal of passion.

As I campaigned during the election campaign, the one thing people told me consistently was that if there was a



ministry that was busted, it was the Ministry of Environment; it did so much to preclude us from getting on with our lives in this province.

She made a comment, "People want their government to protect their environment." I'd like to assure her and all the members who are watching this lovely program on television that the members opposite do not have a monopoly on respect for the environment. We share that respect for the environment. God gave us the environment to use, not to abuse, and we have the same feeling about it that you do. The only problem was we'd gotten the rules and regulations so complicated that we could do nothing else.

She talked about having a grandchild, and I, like her, have grandchildren, and I too am concerned about their future in our province, but I'm also concerned about their future economically. There has to be some kind of balance between our respect for the environment and our ability to live in this province and flourish.

What we are trying to do, with all due respect, is to make it a little simpler process. Our government will protect the environment. We are committed to that because that is the right thing to do. I hope that she and the members opposite understand our commitment to that.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Riverdale has two minutes to respond.

**Ms Churley:** To the member for Etobicoke West, I think his tirade shows how little he knows about the environmental process and what his own government is doing. He takes one example of something in our government that he feels I supported and then throws a tantrum, "Therefore, how could you have ever done anything now or ever to support the environment?" which is such nonsense it's hardly worth talking about it. I say to him that he's right that the environment is not a partisan issue, and it was a Tory government that brought in the Environmental Assessment Act in the first place. I don't think there's any point in speaking to his tirade any more.

To the member for Chatham-Kent, I appreciate your comments about my passion for the environment. I say to him that I have some knowledge as well. I know it's hard for members here to accept that, but I do. It's a combination of knowledge and passion and it's my knowledge that makes me so passionate. I know that what this government is doing goes well beyond this so-called balance that is necessary to protect the environment and make sure there's economic prosperity in this province. I know that. I wouldn't be so passionate if I didn't know that.

The member for Dufferin-Peel: I want to make it clear that what he read out was something we announced, there's no doubt about it, but we didn't announce anything that this government — there are different approaches here — has announced to date. We wouldn't have done that. There's nothing in that information he read out that suggests we would be deregulating the way his government is. We were consulting with environmental groups and working with communities. The Planning Act is one example of that. You took all the environmental protections in the act out. We made it more environmentally friendly. That's clear proof that you don't know what you're talking about.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Galt:** Before I get into my actual speech, just a response to the previous member, a few more comments in relation to that. The member for Riverdale was talking about public participation. In the past that's been voluntary and usually it did happen, but it is enshrined in this particular bill, although she doesn't seem very interested in paying attention to the fact that she didn't even know it was in the bill.

Section 6.1: "When preparing an environmental assessment, the proponent shall consult about the undertaking with such persons as may be interested." I thought she would like to be aware that it's really in the bill and the point that she was making, she totally had missed, because it is there and she was trying to say that we're not going to consult and all that kind of thing. That's the way it used to be: It was accidental or voluntary that it came about. But now it's enshrined right into the bill and will be in the act.

The member for Riverdale made reference to the report card that she made out for the government, and in particular the ministry of the environment. She gave us a F. All I can assume is that stands for "fantastic."

She mentioned, who benefits from landfill sites and getting on with looking after our waste? I would say people like the member for Riverdale really benefit, because if there weren't landfill sites or there were not some incinerators to look after their waste, I'm sure her apartment or her house would soon start to fill up if you couldn't take it someplace else. I'm sure the member for Riverdale would not enjoy her waste building like that.

She expressed some real concerns about incinerators burning resources. Let me tell you about resources, what's been going on. Agricultural wastes created off farms, her government insisted they go to landfill sites. They couldn't be used in any other form. They couldn't be taken back to the farm to be fed to livestock, such as corn husks and corn cobs, nor could you take the manure from farms and spread it on agricultural land. It had to go into landfill sites.

She goes on to talk about the incinerators and about dioxins. The way she talks about dioxins is certainly fearmongering as she rolls them all into one package. She talks about the toxicity of the 2,3,7,8-TCDD dioxin, which, yes, is very toxic, and there are a couple of others that are mildly toxic. The other 70 or so are not toxic at all, but she wraps them all into one bundle and talks about how toxic they are. The measurement of what we allow from the stacks of incinerators is based on the toxic equivalence of the 2,3,7,8-TCDD dioxin, and that's the way it should be, talking about the toxic equivalence of this particular one. I'm sure she'd be interested to know that most dioxins in our environment today come from forest fires, not from incinerators or other activities.

She might also be interested to know about the fish in the east coast that she talks about, why the fish disappeared. The fish disappeared because do-gooders like herself went and stopped the seal hunt. Seals eat fish. Then we end up with seals starving to death. Follow the sequence. You totally messed it up as a bunch of do-gooders down there.

**Mrs Boyd:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: We don't have a quorum in the House.



**The Acting Speaker:** Do we have a quorum?

**Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees (Ms Deborah Deller):** A quorum is not present.

*The acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

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**Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Northumberland has the floor.

**Mr Galt:** I'd like to highlight some of the reforms being proposed through Bill 76, the Environmental Assessment and Consultation Improvement Act. In bringing forward these amendments, we are maintaining the integrity of Ontario's environmental assessment process. We're ensuring that the Environmental Assessment Act continues to serve its overriding function: providing the best possible protection for the environment and for our human health.

Within this context, we are introducing a number of important firsts that will make the environmental assessment process more workable for everyone involved. For the first time, the public will have guaranteed access to the process from the earliest stages. For the first time, there will be early and clear direction on the kind of information to be included in the EA documents. For the first time, there will be strict time frames imposed up front for all key steps in the decision-making process. For the first time, mediation will be available to resolve conflicts in a timelier and less costly manner. For the first time, the minister will have the ability to reject an incomplete assessment early in the process. For the first time, there will be provisions to harmonize with the federal environmental assessment process. This says no to duplication and overlap, and yes to cutting red tape. For the first time, the role of class EAs will be made clear in the legislation. For the first time, the Minister of Environment and Energy will have the power to focus Environmental Assessment Board hearings on outstanding contentious issues. Hearings will not have to go back to square one and cover all issues.

These firsts add up to a more workable and effective environmental assessment process. They will ensure that our ministry meets its mandate while enabling environmentally sound projects to move forward.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions and comments? Further debate?

**Mr Ramsay:** I'm pleased to rise tonight to speak on Bill 76, these amendments to the Environmental Assessment Act. I'm certainly pleased the member for Etobicoke West is temporarily absent from this House, because I certainly wouldn't want to evoke his wrath as the second-to-previous speaker did. I would tiptoe gingerly around my remarks if he was here for fear of evoking his wrath. But he may be back; he may be on the way. So I will be careful and cautious in my remarks.

As was pointed out earlier this evening, it's interesting that the act we are amending today was originally brought into this House by a previous Conservative government. In fact, I think all political party representatives of this province over the years have been very proud that Ontario has had some of the highest standards in environmental assessment in North America. It was a

previous Conservative government that brought that in. Governments after that Conservative government have sort of fine-tuned this act, but basically the nuts and bolts of this act were brought in by a Conservative government, so it's kind of sad that today we see a really thorough gutting of this bill in this House. I think people in Ontario, and that would be all Ontarians, should be very frightful of the changes happening here today. Certainly in a minute I'm going to be going through some of those changes that are proposed in this act. I think they are cause for concern and people should be aware of them.

One of the things the previous Liberal government had brought in that I think was sort of a complementary touch to this particular bill was the introduction of, in a pilot form that was continued through our mandate, intervenor funding. This basically empowered people who wanted to ask questions, to garner their own expertise, with the financial ability to seek out that information and to arm themselves before a full Environmental Assessment Act hearing in order to debate the issues on an equal footing with the proponent of the project.

I think it's very important that we empower that sort of consumer/environmental watchdog activism in society — not to frustrate, not to necessarily delay. I don't mind having some of these amendments come through that are going to streamline the process, but it's very important to have that environmental/consumer activism and watchdogism there to act as a countercheck for proponents of major projects that certainly could have a major impact on our environment. I'm very sad to see that as part of this act there will no longer be intervenor funding for those groups that want to partake in that process.

As I said before, I certainly and our party caucus have no problem with streamlining the process. Many of these hearings have gone on too long. They certainly have been too costly for all the parties concerned. Of course that is a problem and we welcome that sort of change that would streamline that process. But this streamlining —

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale):** In what way?

**Mr Ramsay:** I'll get to that. The member asked me, "In what way?" The concern I have is that the streamlining does not come at the cost of public scrutiny, nor of environmental standards. That must never be allowed to happen, and that's one of the concerns we certainly have with this bill.

Why I think this is going to be happening, and this is sort of à la Bill 26, is that you're empowering the minister of the day, whoever that person may be, with tremendous powers, those powers now being invested in one particular person. You're taking those powers away from a publicly appointed Environmental Assessment Board and from your consumer/environmental watchdog organizations that would have the resources to bring forward their arguments before environmental assessment hearings. So that's a big concern.

Today we're talking about a minister who won't clean up the smog in the city of Toronto that reports say is killing people; there's no doubt about that. We're talking about an environment minister who doesn't believe in



public transit, nor will she take it. So I really don't have the confidence right now with this particular minister that we want to empower her with all these powers where before, under previous Conservative legislation, we empowered basically a civilian board to watch over these projects on behalf of all the people of Ontario. That is very scary.

I think we can see some of the troubles that Minister Wilson in the health ministry has gotten into. When a minister sort of thinks he or she can solve all the problems, take on those problems and solve them, we can see, as we did with Mr Wilson and with the doctors and their medical insurance, some of the problems you can bring on yourself. That's why in government we haven't taken all those powers on ourselves when we find ourselves in the position of being a minister. We appoint well-educated, learned bodies, committees, agencies to handle a lot of this work, to be looking over the facts, to be mediators in the debate when it comes to environmental projects. So empowering all of this power into the minister's hands, I think, is wrong.

Another area I'm very concerned about is the minister's power to scope the hearings. Scoping the hearings means basically limiting the subject matter, the area of this particular project, whatever it is, that the hearings, if it goes to a hearing, can take a look at. This can be very well fraught with danger, because if you do that and something else comes up that you weren't aware of previously, maybe from the proponent as they are continuing their studies or maybe some advocacy group that's discovered some sort of hiccup with the proposal, some new geological phenomenon in the area that wasn't picked up before, nobody can change the mind of the minister. Once that decision has been made, the Environmental Assessment Board can't look into that matter. The public can't request to have that matter looked at. The minister has spoken. The minister has said this particular issue should only be looked at in regard to A and B or whatever, and that's it.

That narrowing of the scope of the hearings, while I know it's attractive for streamlining the process, can bring the process into disrepute. It can be dangerous. We could have something come to light or miss something because we didn't give it the full scrutiny of an environmental assessment hearing. So I would caution the government that they look at that.

We would like to say that we would support the inclusion of mandatory public consultation on EA documents; I think that's a good idea. But again, as I said, without the intervenor funding it is going to be very difficult for the proponent to do the consultation, and looking in the act it is not clearly defined what a consultation is. Under the present act, there is very clear definition of how a public consultation should be adhered to.

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Recently I have gone through a public consultation that Metro Toronto had conducted in my riding of Timiskaming in regard to the potential siting of Metro garbage at the Adams mine site when Metro Toronto was looking at it as a public sector proposal. Very clearly, the act had given them direction as to how the consultation

had to be dealt with with the public. While many proponents might feel this is cumbersome, it's very, very important that the public have confidence that there is an accessible public consultation process and it's accessible because of the time, the information given, but also because the resources are there to fully partake in that consultation on an equal footing with the usually well-financed proponents of that.

One of the big concerns related to what I was just talking about, the Adams mine-Metro garbage issue, is that we're very concerned with the treatment of landfill sites in regard to this legislation. As the members know, there is no requirement that communities must be willing hosts, for instance, of other communities' garbage.

This was a concern in a private member's bill of mine that was defeated two weeks ago in this House where, in my particular circumstance, we have a private proponent looking at siting a waste disposal facility in an old abandoned iron ore mine called the Adams mine site south of Kirkland Lake in the riding of Timiskaming, to house up to 80 million tonnes of Metropolitan Toronto garbage.

This is a notion that, quite frankly, frightens a lot of the people where I live and especially those near that site, but what certainly destroys confidence that people have in this type of proposal is that they don't have a say. This legislation does not speak to this particular situation where communities literally can be invaded. We're talking about a David and Goliath situation here where basically we're looking at potentially 80 million tonnes of Metropolitan Toronto garbage coming in to the Adams mine site just south of Kirkland Lake without the taxpayers having a say through some sort of referendum or vote mechanism. That is a very, very big concern.

I would think and hope that any member who has a rural riding that has lots of rural land that potentially is ripe for a major urban siting of a dump into your area would speak on behalf of the people you represent, and that when the issue came down to your riding you would want to stand up and say, "I want the people I represent to have a direct say whether this project should go ahead or not."

I think that after a full Environmental Assessment Act hearing and making sure that such a mega-dump project is built to the very highest standards and maintained to those very high standards, in the end the people you represent should have a say whether they are a willing host.

We're not talking about us taking care of our own garbage in our own backyard; that's certainly a different matter. Much of what you're doing here is going to streamline that, but there are other situations occurring every day in this province where one municipality or another jurisdiction would like to site a dump in your particular town or village or township, and I think in the end the people you represent should have a direct say whether that should happen or not because potentially that can have a very major disruptive effect upon your community.

In my case, in Timiskaming we would have at least 200- 300- or 400-car trains coming through all the small communities, winding their way up to the Adams mine



site. These containers, as they wear, some day are probably going to spring some leaks. We're probably going to have some leachate already starting from highly compressed garbage that is packed into these containers leaking along the rail bed all the way through from Toronto up through my riding. Then, of course, when that waste gets there, it's going to be dumped into the site and piled up and probably not capped for years and years. Hopefully, the proponent gets enough waste in order to fill such a site.

So there are major concerns when this type of mega-dump proposal is proposed in your backyard. Unfortunately, if the day ever came, and I hope it doesn't come to you in your riding as it has to mine, when you have to face that issue that you, if you did have to face that issue, I would hope you would seek to have the protection put into here that I speak to tonight because I think you would want that on behalf of your constituents.

The other concern we have is that while this act gives more responsibility to the Minister of Environment and Energy staff and specially their environmental assessment branch staff, at the same time the minister has greatly reduced the number of staff in that ministry. We're very concerned that while they have more powers, they maybe have less person-power in order to enact and enforce these new powers that they have. That certainly is a concern.

I'd like to talk a little bit, Mr Speaker, now, of some of the process that — Madam Speaker is over here in her chair now, so welcome, Mr Speaker. I'd like to talk a little bit about the new process and some of the concerns I have with it.

As one of the previous speakers had mentioned, there's a whole new terms of reference section. The proponent now has to prepare terms of reference for the project that define which environmental issues, as the proponent sees it — ie, maybe groundwater contamination, surface water, air contaminants, whatever it may be, leachate levels — the proponent now is going to be starting to set some of those terms of reference as to what that organization believes are the proper terms of reference for that project, what they should be and what are those issues that should be examined in the environmental assessment process.

Then the ministry staff are going to have three weeks back to comment on that. If there is disagreement with that, the minister has up to four weeks to seek public input, also on these terms of reference, and approve the document, and contentious issues can be set out for 60 days of mediation.

I appreciate having that mediation process and we'll have to see how that works, but once the terms of reference are approved, and I think this is very important, new environmental issues can never be included at any time during the EA process, and the minister's decision cannot be appealed.

I really think this is a grave mistake and I understand probably the initial thinking of why the government has put this in, but I think it would be a big mistake to preclude any issue that might pop up later on when you're talking about the environment.

I would think we'd want to be sure as we're embarking on any major project that potentially could have a

major impact on our environment, that we don't preclude any particular item that might develop later on from full scrutiny of an environmental assessment process. I think that's very, very important.

The next step is that the proponent prepares the full environmental assessment document based on the approved terms of reference and the proponent must consult — and here we go again, there's no definition provided — with such persons as may be interested.

This is a bit of a concern again. What's this consultation to do and with whom are they supposed to consult? There's really no definition as to what a consultation means under this act. I think it's very important that we spell out, and I think it should be done in the act and not just regulations.

I hope the minister has in mind that possibly the consultation techniques will be spelled out in regulations. I often wonder and get very concerned about regulations we see after the fact, that major items such as consultation are not spelled out in the legislation itself so the people of Ontario, through the legislative chamber, can absolutely see what is meant by the ministry in this piece of legislation. Something as major as consultation on environmental issues, I think, should be spelled out. It should be clear and it should be spelled out in the legislation and not just in regulation. So I would ask that the minister look to amendments to bring that forward in further debate of this bill.

After the EA document is submitted to the ministry, the public and any interested government agencies can submit comments on the document to the Ministry of Environment and Energy. The minister then can decide to either approve the project, send the proponent and the complainants, if there were complainant groups, out for 60 days of mediation or send the EA document to the Environmental Assessment Board for a hearing.

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The problem here, however, is that the minister will only allow the EA board to examine issues that he or she deems to be contentious. Here again, from sort of the original scoping that the proponent is going to bring forward, saying basically to the public and the ministry, "These are the only issues that I think should be examined," then the minister again can scope from there once those are agreed on, can even scope further and say: "No, there's only one issue I wish an Environmental Assessment Board to take a look at and it's this issue only. I'm satisfied with surface water, groundwater, air contaminants. I just want you to examine maybe the possible disruption of air traffic control because of the migratory bird situation between the dump and a major nesting ground at a nearby adjacent lake."

To give the minister of the day that sort of scoping power would, I think, arbitrarily limit far too much the scope, the breadth of this particular examination, and is wrong. I think we're bound to make a mistake down the road if we do that.

I must tell you that for streamlining the process and making it more efficient and making it more cost-effective, I would rather err on the side of the environment and make sure we don't make an error on the environment because we wanted to have a more efficient process.



I think that's very important and I would ask the minister to give a second thought to that and maybe entertain some amendments that I think would be coming forward.

Some of the key changes from the current process are basically that the minister today with this new act now would have sweeping new powers. It is the minister's sole discretion of approving the terms of reference as I've mentioned, designating which issues be sent to the board and the time allotment for board review.

Again, sometimes when you get into some of these issues, it is not apparent at the outset as to the complexity of the issues, the number of interested groups and people, the time it would take to hear the expertise that might come forward both from the proponent and from any intervenors that wish to be included in this and I think it would be almost impossible to start to scope and time-allocate the process in any meaningful way without endangering the legitimacy of the process. Again, I would ask the minister to take a look at that.

Previously, only the full cabinet could grant exceptions to EAs or overturn EA board decisions; now the minister has complete authority over both of these actions. Again it's empowering the minister solely and exclusively with these powers. Whether we're in the government at the time or you're in the government now, sometimes we have greater or less confidence in the ministers we have even in our own government. Obviously, from government to government, from term to term within government, we have some ministers who perform better than others, ones we have more confidence in than others.

To basically give that empowerment to a minister, maybe a minister of that day who we think doesn't particularly have as strong a commitment to the environment that maybe other ministers or your current minister has today, I think is frightening.

I think it's frightening to empower one particular person with that sort of power, especially when you're talking about the environment. You're not talking about just closing a hospital, which you've given the Minister of Health the power to do. You're talking about the environment. You're talking probably about permanent, long-term impact on the air we breathe, the water we drink.

I think it's very important to rethink this and to make sure that you only maybe fine-tune the very good system you, the government, the Conservative Party, brought in years ago in the original act. It doesn't need the major overhaul you're giving it today. It needs some fine-tuning, there's no doubt about it, and I think that's what we're asking you to do today.

Presently, there are no terms of reference for a project and the minister does not have the power to assign only specific issues at this moment or the time frame, as this new bill is going to be giving. Today, new issues can be raised by the public at any time during an environmental assessment hearing. I think it's very important to allow the public, as new issues arise, to raise those issues before a full EA process. It's very, very important.

In my remaining time I would like to talk a little more specifically about landfills because I think, of all the projects that from day to day are proposed in Ontario, landfills have some of the greatest impact upon our

environment, and will continue to do so until we find better, more efficient ways to handle waste.

I come to this argument as a proponent for high-tech, high-temperature incineration. I believe, quite frankly, that probably it's old-fashioned and barbaric to be burying our waste in the ground today. We should be finding new and modern high-tech methods of handling our waste. I think some of those methods exist. I know there are new methods such as high-temperature vaporization methods that aren't even incineration that are just around the corner from being approved. I think we need to be expediting that sort of research and looking at those methods rather than finding the biggest hole in the ground we can in this province and putting all the garbage we can find into it and trying to cap it off and trying to pump up leachate and trying to purify that leachate before we put it into our groundwater and our surface water. I think we really have to start to look at new methods of handling our waste.

One of the concerns I have with landfill sites is, as I see it from the bill, basically a lowering of the standards that are going to be used for siting landfill sites. I really don't believe we should be allowed at all to degrade the existing water of a lake or a river or our groundwater. I don't know why today we should allow that degradation to happen. I think when it comes to that we should have zero tolerance. I've looked at some of the accepted tolerances that are included in this act in regard to groundwater in particular that's of particular concern to myself, and when it comes to health-related chemicals and non-health-related chemicals. There's quite a variable there that the ministry, under this legislation, is going to be allowing for these different chemicals compared to the background readings today of the river or the lake and what we're going to be allowed to degrade in comparison to the drinking water standard for this province.

In a major landfill site such as being proposed in my riding, up to 65,000 contaminants can be found in the leachate that would come from a major landfill site that comes from garbage from a major city such as Metropolitan Toronto. We, quite frankly, don't have a handle on 10% of those chemicals. We don't even have an impact of what a lot of those chemicals potentially can do, so why would we allow any further degradation of our groundwater and of our surface water than we have already today when we depend on our groundwater and surface water in many communities, in many rural settings, whether it's for feed, watering agriculture, or the drinking water for a population? Why would we allow further degradation of any water source on this planet?

I think in 1996 we should be striving for a higher standard. We should be striving for the very best standard attainable. We know when we take a look at cancer rates, for instance, in North America that where the highest rates are is the very bottom of the Mississippi basin, in New Orleans, in Louisiana, where basically the chemical soup is its richest, as all the different runoffs and chemicals, whether it's from agriculture, from industrial applications, other plants — the mix of those chemicals with the chlorine that we put into our drinking water all flows into Ohio, Missouri, comes down the Mississippi River Valley, and many of the communities along that



river system derive their drinking water from that river system. If you take a look at where the worst cancers are in North America, at the very bottom of that river system is where they may be found.

That's frightening, and we know that today. If we know that today, we should have the sense, the common sense, if you will, to stop that. We should never, ever again allow the degradation of any water source on this planet. Water is becoming a more and more precious commodity. We have ruined so much of it. We have ruined much of our groundwater through irresponsible irrigation techniques in the Midwest of the United States. The Oglala aquifer that feeds much of the Iowa and Kansas corn country that we use to irrigate the Midwest breadbasket of the United States is contaminated because as we pump the water out of the ground, the water leaches back, carrying with it all the agricultural chemicals back into the groundwater. Subsequent recycling of that back and forth every season over the last 40 years has basically contaminated one of the richest sources of groundwater in North America. Surely in Ontario in 1996, with the wisdom we have today, I would think with the esteem we hold the environment in today, we would never, ever again allow the degradation of our water source in this province.

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We in Ontario are the guardians of the world's largest supply of fresh water. In fact, we have just about half of the world's fresh water supply in this province. We not only should be the guardian and the steward of that fresh water supply for us Ontarians and our future generations, but we should also be the guardian of that fresh water supply for the rest of this country and the rest of the world, because the rest of this planet is probably going to have to rely on that water too sometime. So we better keep it clean and we better keep it pure. We better start finding new ways to handle our waste, new high-technology ways to handle waste, rather than just finding the very biggest pit in the ground.

To be putting 80 million tonnes of garbage in a fractured rock pit is absolutely ludicrous. It's insane, it's a bad idea, and it should never be allowed to happen. This government should never allow an environmental assessment to pass on the Adams mine waste proposal, because if you do and you don't allow it go to a hearing and if you don't let the local people have a say on that, I'm telling you, there will be widespread civil disobedience in Timiskaming. There will be widespread civil disobedience throughout my riding and I will be there on the front line as a part of that if you allow that to happen without due diligence and strictly a full EA hearing and in the end our local people having a say.

It should never happen and, quite frankly, I don't believe it's going to happen. It should never happen. We should never, ever, even with the very best engineering today, say, "Yes, this looks safe." I can just see somebody coming down the road in 30 or 40 years and saying: "Boy, those stupid people back in 1996. I guess they didn't know about the impact of leachate in a fractured rock pit. It's too bad they didn't know. It's a real mess up here."

We've lost the agricultural belt and the little clay belt of Timiskaming because the aquifer now is contaminated.

It's just not worth the risk. So I would ask the minister and I'd ask the government members to take a second look at this bill. We're not against fine-tuning it, we're not against streamlining this process, but don't gut it. Don't gut it at the expense of public inquiry and don't gut it at the expense of the environment.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** It's very interesting to listen tonight in this debate especially to the member for Timiskaming as a previous member of the cabinet of the Peterson government. Between 1987 and 1990 you were in cabinet, I recall, Mr Ramsay, and you were part of a government that imposed the tire tax on this province. This was to develop programs for the safe disposal of tires. The cost to the consumer was at the time quite willingly accepted by the consumers of this province when they went to buy new tires and they paid their \$5 per tire disposal tax.

*Interjection.*

**Mrs Marland:** I think he can answer it, I say to the member for St Catharines, without the help of the former Minister of the Environment.

The Liberal government collected in their initial year, as I recall, \$40 million, and after that over \$100 million a year. We did not see in this province one single program for the safe disposal of tires. What we had instead was the worst fire in a used tire dump at Hagersville, as I recall.

So to have the member for Timiskaming, I say with respect, come into this place this evening and tell us what is wrong with our environmental legislation after you were the government for five years and couldn't even implement the programs through the tire tax that the tire tax was designed for, the safe reuse of used tires, all kinds of wonderful announcements — I remember asking the then Treasurer, Bob Nixon, to designate that money for programs, and it never happened.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I very much enjoyed the remarks of the member for Timiskaming, and I know the member for London Centre will be talking about environmental issues after this.

I really thought he capsulized best what this legislation is all about and the ramifications for his riding. There is a proposal, as we all know, to take the garbage from the greater Toronto area and plunk it in the riding of Timiskaming. He was good enough to bring forward a piece of legislation or a resolution in this House in the time allocated for private members' public business where he had some very positive and constructive and practical suggestions on how the process might be handled. He wasn't saying that under no circumstances should this be considered. He simply thought there was a reasonable process to follow that, because it was taking garbage from one area of the province, a large amount, and putting it in another area, involved consulting the local people by means of a referendum. I thought the Conservative-Reform party across the floor was a party which believed in referenda and that they would be embracing his resolution. Unfortunately, his resolution or his bill did not pass on that occasion.



I think through his speech today he's demonstrated clearly why it would have been preferable to pass that legislation and why it would have been important to maintain the environmental process which is in place at this time, as opposed to weakening it so that we're in a position today of having landfills approved that might not be approved. I'm sure the member for Cochrane South will be commenting on this in just a moment, and I will yield the floor to the member for Cochrane South.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** Mr Speaker, nice to see you in the chair, doing your job, as always, in a diligent way.

I just want to say I've been listening to the speeches tonight. The member from Temagami, who resides just south of the riding I'm in, is quite right. The problem here, which we're going to get into, is a complete ratcheting down of the whole system in regard to what happens with the environment. I think the principle here that really irks a lot of people who are involved in the environmental movement and those people who care is that we have spent such a long time. The member for St Catharines would know, with the amount of time that he spent as Minister of the Environment, and I know our former ministers of the environment spent such a long time over a period of time trying to develop legislation that is able to deal with the question of how you balance the economic interests of the corporation at the same time as being able to balance off the needs of the public.

I guess what's fairly difficult for us to take as people in opposition who care about these issues deeply is that you're seeing a government throwing all of that away in an effort to give a few people in society an opportunity to make an extra buck. Sure, in the end, making a buck is important. That's what an economy is all about. An economy is about the ability to make a dollar and to prosper, and out of that activity comes economic growth. But I think the question you have to ask yourself is, at what cost? At what cost do we allow people to do that? Should regulations in the environment be so onerous that economic activity is not allowed to happen? Of course not. Who would argue?

**Mr Hastings:** Be careful.

**Mr Bisson:** I hear the member for Bedrock — I mean the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale. Excuse me. I apologize for that; it's getting late at night. With that, I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**Mr Hastings:** It's very interesting to have listened all day to the varying echoes of internal contradictions from members of the Peterson regime. They talk about how they're not in favour of the bill because it guts the whole environmental assessment operation, yet in the next breath the member for Lawrence said that he was in favour and saw the necessity for reform, but they weren't necessarily in favour of any reform if it involved streamlining. But we could have a little bit of streamlining from the member for Timiskaming, but he never got around to really elaborating on what type of streamlining. I asked him in the interjection, and he just went on and talked about his concern about landfill sites.

The other thing that's very interesting from the members opposite: They talk about preserving standards; they want to have high environmental standards. Yet when you

look at the highest standards that we have in North America today and you look at the outcomes that we're getting, we're not getting practical results with those high standards.

**2030**

Take the case of smog in southern Ontario. If you have a regime of strict regulation, and if it had been as successful as they argue over there it is, then why do we still have any smog left? Working on a clear logic of high environmental regulation, we should have no smog today, but the member for St Catharines has always argued we need tighter regulation. If that were so, then we should have no smog right today, but in fact, even if you had the highest level of enforcement, you still have smog, because you fail to recognize international air flows and all that results therefrom. It's incredible.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member's time has expired. The member for Timiskaming has two minutes.

**Mr Bradley:** Are we in the 1950s?

**Mr Ramsay:** Yes, we've got a lot here to comment on. I'd just like to say to the member for Mississauga South — oh, there she is — bringing up the tire tax, I must say, Margaret, that the revenue from the tire tax went to a lot of other recycling programs. In fact, the blue box program, a very famous program that this minister here, Jim Bradley, brought in back in the 1980s, and Mr Bradley, the former environment minister, received a reward from the United Nations for the blue box system and many municipalities right across —

*Interjections.*

**Mr Ramsay:** That's what he told me, and I've read testaments in magazines about that too, that Mr Bradley was one of the best environment ministers this province has ever had, recognized by the United Nations. Even though I make him blush, I will still go on and say that. I'm very, very proud of that for sure.

I would say to the member from Bedrock over there that you talk about smog. What you're saying is, "How come we have smog today with the standards we have?" We can do better. Look at California. They've got much better standards than we do. We've got to start looking at higher standards. Yes, we have transborder migration of pollutants that cause smog in Ontario, up the Ohio Valley; no doubt about it. But we can still do a better job with emissions from Ontario.

I think we start to look at the emissions of cars, start to look at some of the older cars in Ontario. Many provinces, such as Nova Scotia, for instance, have mandatory annual inspections of their cars. Maybe that's a little much for Ontario with probably the five million cars we have here, but I think we have to start to pull off by age some of the older cars and make sure they are up to standard. Why should we be going by some car that's just puffing out blue smoke in Ontario? Why don't we look at that? I would hope the member would not be against that sort of thing.

**Mr Hastings:** That sure is a good idea.

**Mr Ramsay:** Well, there you are. Maybe we could work together as legislators on a private member's bill. We'll call it the blue-smoke pull-over-the-car bill and we'll get everybody to sponsor that. I welcome that support from the member.



**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

Mrs Elliott has moved second reading of Bill 76. Is it the wish of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West):** Mr Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to defer the vote until tomorrow after orders of the day.

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Immediately after question period?

**Mrs Ross:** Yes, sorry.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent? It is agreed. The vote is deferred.

#### ALCOHOL, GAMING AND CHARITY FUNDING PUBLIC INTEREST ACT, 1996

#### LOI DE 1996 RÉGISSANT LES ALCOOLS, LES JEUX ET LE FINANCEMENT DES ORGANISMES DE BIENFAISANCE DANS L'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC

Mr Sterling moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 75, An Act to regulate alcohol and gaming in the public interest, to fund charities through the responsible management of video lotteries and to amend certain statutes related to liquor and gaming / *Projet de loi 75, Loi réglementant les alcools et les jeux dans l'intérêt public, prévoyant le financement des organismes de bienfaisance grâce à la gestion responsable des loteries vidéo et modifiant des lois en ce qui a trait aux alcools et aux jeux.*

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations):** I'm pleased to be involved in the second reading debate of the Alcohol, Gaming and Charity Funding Public Interest Act. I hope to talk about a number of issues today with regard to this bill. This bill is all-encompassing, with many of the parts, however, related to each other.

This bill amalgamates the Liquor Licence Board of Ontario and the Gaming Control Commission of Ontario. It takes from the LCBO some of its regulatory functions and gives them to the new Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario. It introduces to Ontario a control system to introduce video lottery machines to the province. It introduces to Ontario a regime whereby charity gaming halls will be introduced to the province. It deals with a problem we have with regard to addictive gambling, in providing funding to deal with that problem. Last, it deals with more stringent liquor control laws in Ontario to deal with troubled premises in terms of the control of liquor.

I'd like to talk about all those matters in my opening remarks.

First, I would like to talk about the amalgamation of the Liquor Licence Board of Ontario and the gaming commission. As I mentioned in my opening remarks, we will be combining these two boards into one. It will, as a single agency, be able to focus more clearly on enforcement measures relating both to the control of beverage

alcohol but also to gaming in Ontario. This new agency will save the taxpayers some money, no question. We estimate that the saving could be in the neighbourhood of somewhere between \$1 million and \$2 million.

The restructuring will amalgamate the licensing functions into one organization, which should lead to greater efficiencies and better customer service. I hope that by having these two agencies in one it will allow smaller communities to benefit from greater service, because there will be justification for having one employee in a more remote area of the province. That's important to those of us from eastern Ontario and northern Ontario in particular.

This move also supports our government's commitment to continue to cut the number of commissions and agencies and boards we have in our province. I have already appointed the chairman of the Gaming Control Commission as the chairman of the Liquor Licence Board of Ontario, that person being Clare Lewis, who is now serving in both functions. That move in itself saved the taxpayers over \$100,000 in the elimination of one salary of the chief administrative officer of those boards.

The other interesting move with regard to the amalgamation of these two agencies is the taking away from the LCBO the regulatory power it has. This has long been a sore point, particularly with groups like MADD and groups concerned about drinking. They've always viewed it as a conflict of interest that the LCBO, the primary retailer of alcohol in the province, is also in the regulation business. They believe, and we believe now and will be effecting by the change in this legislation — we will be making the LCBO, pure and simple, a retailer of alcohol in Ontario.

The transfer of these regulatory powers will include the transfer of the regulatory power to deal with private delivery services, and the authority over the establishment, location and hours and other conditions of operation of retail outlets, which includes not only their own stores but also includes Brewers Retail establishments. They set the rules according to when they can be open and the rules surrounding their particular operations. Of course we have a number of vintners in the province who have their own stores and sell wine from their own premises. Therefore, that regulating power will be moved from the LCBO over to the new Alcohol and Gaming Commission.

#### 2040

It seems to me that this will not only take away this potential conflict of interest which has existed for over 60, 70 years since the LCBO was founded, but it will also ensure that all the regulatory matters concerning the sale and distribution of alcohol are in one organization. They will be in this one organization which we are creating in this bill.

There will be, as I mentioned, some savings, and there will be some dislocation of employees. But because we have a new casino opening, I believe at the end of July, near Orillia on the Rama reserve, which was granted by the previous government, and a new casino that will be opening in Niagara Falls, and also a number of charitable gaming halls which will be created under this legislation, it is our expectation that the joint board, the Alcohol and



Gaming Commission, will have more employees. It takes quite a number of employees, quite frankly, to manage the gaming halls and these casinos. Notwithstanding that they're joining these two boards and gaining some efficiencies, in fact the total organization will be growing in number in the not-too-far-distant future.

One of the attractive parts of joining these two functions at this time while we're introducing video lotteries is to ensure that both gaming and liquor licence regulations are followed instead of sending separate inspectors from the two organizations.

I would point out that similar mergers to the one I am proposing in Bill 75 have been taken in a number of other provinces. Alberta, Saskatchewan, Quebec and Nova Scotia have all sought efficiencies through amalgamating their liquor boards and other regulatory bodies.

Bill 75 also amends a number of other statutes that will make it possible for controlled and measured introduction of video lotteries in Ontario. Concern has been raised about the effect of video lotteries on our younger population. In this respect, we will be amending the Liquor Licence Act to permit the revocation or suspension of a liquor licence when a licence holder or an employee allows a person under the age of 19 to play video lotteries or to be in an area restricted for video lottery players. If video lotteries are put in licensed premises, the owner or the licensee will not only have to be concerned if he allows a youth to play the video lottery machines, he will not only have to be concerned about what will happen with regard to the video lottery machines, but he or she will also have to be concerned that they will lose their liquor licence if they are found to have a young person playing the video lottery machines.

As the Minister of Finance outlined in the budget speech, we are introducing the video lottery machines here to fight a problem which exists across the province. We have somewhere between, as estimated by the police, 15,000 and 25,000 video lottery machines in the province at present. These machines are not very good for the government, and they're not very good for the players either. One prospect you have in regulating this particular activity is that you ensure that the player gets a certain amount back out of the machine. We have heard stories that the illegal video lottery machines out there now pay back as little as 20% of what is played into the machines. The machines that will be licensed through the gaming commission and controlled by the Ontario Lottery Corp will be paying back somewhere in the neighbourhood of 85% to 90% — and I can't say the exact figure on that — back to the patrons.

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr Sterling:** The former Minister of Transportation, who supported the introduction of casinos in Windsor and in Rama, is now concerned about video lottery machines in other parts of the province.

With these machines, we want to make sure we have the strongest possible laws, in terms of regulating, in our country. British Columbia and Ontario are the only two provinces which do not have these machines. We've also promised that we will have the lowest number of machines per population of any of the provinces that now have them.

In order to fight the existing problem, to have some control over these — and I guess as a bonus too — we have promised that charities will get 10% of the win out of these machines. This is going to be a tremendous boon to the charitable community in terms of what they will get out of this. And as the finance minister indicated, which I will be talking about a little later, there will be some revenue given to those people and programs dealing with addiction to gambling, which we do not deny is there. We are going to be the first jurisdiction in North America that deals with it as seriously as we are dealing with it in this piece of legislation.

One of the odd parts of the law we have in our country and in our province is that under our Criminal Code the only entity that can run video lottery terminals is the province. We have been given that specific mandate in the Criminal Code of Canada. Therefore, we must have some direct involvement in the running of these machines if we are going to have them in Ontario.

The Ontario Lottery Corporation Act will be amended to make the Ontario Lottery Corp responsible for this, and they will be under the regulatory regime of the Alcohol and Gaming Commission, which will be in my ministry. The Ontario Lottery Corp is under the Honourable William Saunderson's ministry, the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism. The business aspect of this is within his ministry, and the regulatory part is within the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations.

This law will also reinforce restricted access to areas designated for video lottery play and will prohibit play by persons under the age of 19 years. If an owner of an establishment or a racetrack or a charity gaming hall is going to have video lotteries, they will have to have a restricted area and ensure that no one under the age of 19 goes into that area. That will be part of the regulations within this law we are proposing today.

Although our proposal indicated very clearly that the introduction and operation of VLTs by our government will be done in a measured and tightly controlled fashion, we are building the necessary safeguards, we believe, to help counter the illegal gaming activity in the province and bring much-needed discipline and control to our gaming marketplace.

As I mentioned before, we will be putting aside 2% of lottery revenues to enable the government to support the problem of gambling addiction strategy and research and public awareness. As I also mentioned before, no jurisdiction in North America has put this many resources towards this problem we have in our community.

**2050**

Video lotteries might, to some people, be a significant problem to deal with in terms of gaming, but I want to indicate that gaming in Ontario now attracts \$10 billion worth of business a year. That includes our lotteries, our horse racing, our casinos and a number of other places. In putting aside 2% of the revenue, we will be able to deal not only with the problems that spin out of video lotteries — as I said, we're plagued by these illegal machines — but also with the problems associated with all the legal gambling which is now taking place and has



been sanctioned by previous governments, as well as the illegal gambling taking place in our society.

In a news release, Mr Tibor Barsony, the executive director of the Canadian Foundation on Compulsive Gambling, said, "After 14 years of struggling alone to place the issue of problem and compulsive gambling in the consciousness of gaming providers in Ontario, a light finally begins to shine at the end of the tunnel."

He went on to say, "The government's setting aside of 2%, estimated to be some \$9 or \$10 million per year, represents an important step in recognizing and beginning to deal with the problem."

"The government's decision to initially locate VLTs only at racetracks and permanent charity event sites reflects the careful approach advocated by the foundation."

As I said in my statement to the House on June 13, 1996, we believe these video lotteries, implemented with tight regulatory control and within a limited-access environment, can meet a legitimate entertainment demand. At the same time, they will provide an increasing flow of funds to community charities across the province and assist the horse racing industry and the province's hospitality sector to compete and grow.

Again let me quote from correspondence we have received relating to our policy. In a letter to the Premier on May 8, from Mr Frank Chapman, chair of the Provincial Bingo Charitable Activities Association, he said, "I'm writing to express how appreciative we are of the initiatives to support charitable fund-raising that were announced by the Minister of Finance."

That's because he recognizes as well as I do that there is a significant problem with what is happening in the province both with regard to video lottery machines and with regard to what we have known as Monte Carlo nights.

He went on to say: "In the public debate over gaming in recent years, our sector has often been overlooked. Your recognition of the significant contribution of the charitable sector and volunteers to our province and the role that charitable fund-raising plays is very important to our membership."

"We support the new move towards permanent charitable gaming halls, including video lotteries, and we are looking forward to working closely with your officials on their implementation."

He concluded by saying: "Thank you again for your efforts on our behalf. It is clear to us that you wish to define government as a true partner in our efforts."

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** Who drafted that?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** That is not drafting. One of the members across alleges that we put words into the mouth of Mr Chapman. Nothing could be further from the truth.

It's quite clear to any reasonable person that this government is determined to implement these gaming initiatives in a very cautious and careful manner. We have had a significant problem with what we have known as Monte Carlo nights across the province of Ontario. Monte Carlo nights have occupied some 9,000 nights in the province of Ontario encompassing some 3,000 events. One of the problems with these Monte Carlo nights is they were set up for the benefit of charities, but charities

are only receiving \$12 million of \$100 million in profits out of Monte Carlo nights.

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr Sterling:** I'm asked where all the money's going. The problem is that these are very inefficiently run and the fact of the matter is we cannot properly control or exercise authority over these Monte Carlo nights.

We have been urged by the charitable community, "Please get these particular events into permanent sites" because then they will be operated in a more efficient manner and also we will ensure that the charities get a fair shake. We are estimating that charities will no longer get \$12 million from Monte Carlo nights, they are going to get somewhere between \$80 million and \$100 million from permanent charitable gaming halls. That's a tremendous increase in terms of the benefit that charities are going to get out of essentially the same activity.

One of the matters, which was raised to me by a number of members, including the member for High Park-Swansea, the minister from Scarborough-Ellesmere, was a problem in some of their constituencies with what we call problem licensed establishments. These are establishments where we have liquor licensees who are flouting the law. We would send in the police to charge people with offences that were occurring in these particular premises. We would call hearings. We would have them called in front of the Liquor Licence Board of Ontario and these operators would totally disregard the needs and the wants of the neighbourhood there.

We are introducing in this legislation the toughest laws to deal with these bad actors in Canada. If a liquor licence is revoked, the Liquor Licence Board of Ontario will have the authority to freeze that premise from receiving another liquor licence for a period of two years.

Community groups in Parkdale, community groups in Scarborough are sick and tired of going to the liquor licence board, expending a great amount of time and money to hire counsel to bring these people to heel only to be met with the transfer of the licence to another person who carried on the operations the next week, the next month or three months down the road.

This does in some ways compromise property rights because in fact we are not only dealing with a licensee who may be a tenant, but we are also dealing with the property owner.

I want to tell you, Mr Speaker, that we had a discussion — I guess we shouldn't talk about discussions in caucus. You may know that my caucus and my party are very concerned about property rights, but on this issue I want to tell you that the support within the Progressive Conservative caucus for this amendment was unbelievably strong. This party has recognized the needs of the neighbourhood over the needs of the individual owner, in this case, and find that this particular amendment, this strengthening of our liquor licence laws in the province of Ontario, is entirely justified.

**2100**

I realized that some parts of this legislation will be difficult for members of the Legislature to accept. I must admit that on certain occasions I questioned certain parts of the legislation myself, but together this package, I believe, number one, recognizes existing problems that



are there in our province of Ontario. This particular piece of legislation deals with those problems in a direct and meaningful manner. This legislation deals with a significant problem we have with gambling addiction in a real and meaningful manner. This legislation deals with a difficult problem we have with a small number but very bad operators in the liquor licence area in this province.

This action, this particular legislation enables us to go forward with these initiatives in a slow and measured way to ensure that as we go down this road, we will ensure that it is done correctly, that young people will not gain access to these gambling and gaming activities and that we will do it in a controlled fashion.

I believe that, overall, this package is a very good package that we will put forward and it will not only ensure that gaming and liquor laws in the province of Ontario will be stronger, it will also ensure that the agency, the Alcohol and Gaming Commission, will be a much stronger organization to deal with those problems as well.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Comments and questions?

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** The minister has attempted to justify this terrible piece of legislation by talking about 55 other things contained in the legislation. If he wanted to bring forward legislation to deal with the other matters and not try to slip in video lottery terminals along with it, one could say we could consider the other matters on their merit.

For one thing, he's merging two boards, which means what he's going to do is have fewer inspectors and fewer inspections taking place. He's going to have fewer employees and that's exactly what's going to happen with this.

We can be assured that there will be no video lottery terminals in the Albany Club, the exclusive rich persons' club in Toronto often frequented by Tory cabinet ministers and others in the high echelon of the Progressive Conservative Party. They will not have the machines in there even though those people will have the most money to spend on the machines because they'll be getting the most benefit from the tax cut, the 30% income tax cut which is going to largely or to the greatest extent help those who are the richest and most powerful in the province.

I'll be interested to hear this evening the words of my friend the canon from High Park. Maybe I've elevated him to the position of canon. It wouldn't be that, but I will elevate him tonight to the position of canon from High Park on the matter of video lottery terminals, not the other bogus stuff you're throwing in with this bill to make it palatable to him. The member for York-Mackenzie who has spoken out on family values on many occasions — I want to know how this is going to enhance the family values of this province by bringing in video lottery terminals eventually in the bars and restaurants of this province.

The minister speaks of bad actors. The worst actors in this case are the members of the provincial government who are sanctioning this awful kind of gambling, the most insidious kind of gambling. I know it will enhance the numbers at your Tory fund-raisers as representatives

who own the bars and the restaurants and other places who are going to have these will fill your coffers, but there's an awful price to be paid by the most desperate people in our society.

**Mr Pouliot:** I'm truly appalled and shocked. In a mere 12 years, I never thought that we would have the unspeakable pursuit of the most vulnerable. What's next? Will the minister who should protect the consumer forge an alliance with the Minister of Education and have one in every classroom, and maybe for the little ones have a set of stairs so they can go and deposit at the altar of sin their weekly allowance? They've gone straight for the gutter. Everybody else is advocating games of chance in the confines of a well-managed and well-monitored casino, not every establishment, where people will simply get ripped off. This is obscene; this is porcine; this is an attempt at the very most vulnerable to grab every last dollar in their pockets.

The minister says, "We shall return 90%." There isn't a casino in the world that does not return 95% to slots. There isn't a casino in the world — pass, don't pass, make the point; dice and craps, 1.7%; blackjack, 4.5%. But this ripoff artist, some would say this thief, will go and grab 10% and rake it in because they have become insatiable. Shame on all of them. I don't want to be associated with these kinds of ripoff artists. Unbelievable.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** Mr Speaker, I hope the member for Nipigon will contemplate his words of accusation, using the word "thief." I suggest that is rather unparliamentary.

I say to the minister that while the subject of video lottery terminals is a very difficult subject for a lot of members in this House and certainly not just the member for Lake Nipigon, who seems to have his wonderful flair for the dramatic tonight in dealing with the subject — but I remember sitting in this House, because he and I were elected at the same time, in 1985, and he talks about being here 12 years. I think he needs a lottery terminal, because it's only actually 11 years that we've been here.

In any case, I remember that member voting in favour of the introduction of casinos in this province, and I don't think we can stand here and pontificate with such self-righteousness on one subject, having dealt previously with another. I would like someone to tell me, what is the solution to the fact that we have \$10 billion per year in Ontario in illegal gambling? That in itself is our deficit. We could pay off our deficit. If we talk about video lottery terminals and this legislation putting them under some kind of control, perhaps we will solve the problem of 18,000 to 20,000 of these VLTs that are operating illegally, bringing in \$2,000 a week on average, \$1,000 for the owner and \$1,000 for the operator. This is a problem that exists today. The introduction of this legislation hopefully will help to make some controls in some areas, and that would be an improvement.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition):** I'm not sure whether I will have an opportunity to speak in some greater length on the legislation that has been put before this House, because this is an issue on which the members of our caucus feel very strongly. We have a long lineup of people who want to address the issue and to express our concerns about the further introduction of



video lottery terminals or slot machines outside the existing commercial casino, or casinos, as it will become plural in a very short order.

I have to say that I find it absolutely incredible to hear the member who has just spoken use the government argument that because we are losing dollars in illegal gambling, we should therefore make gambling more legal and be able to get the government's fair share of those lost dollars. It seems to me that if we were going to deal with every problem that we have with illegal operations by legalizing the operation, we would have a very different kind of society in this province. That is exactly what we're going to have as this government not only introduces slot machines in locations other than commercial casinos but brings in legislation which allows a proliferation of these slot machines with virtually no controls over them at all.

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If I have an opportunity to speak at greater length on this issue, I will want to address in particular the introduction of video lottery terminals in charity casinos. I personally think there are reasonable grounds to suggest that charities could have a permanent casino base with a maximum bet of \$25, an alternative for many communities to introducing the big commercial casinos. Those would be truly charity casinos where all the dollars that would be gained there would go to the benefit of charities in that community. That's clearly not good enough for this government that is decidedly on a revenue grab to help support its misguided fiscal agenda where it needs money to be able to deliver its tax cut commitment. They want their share of the take, and the take from a charity casino that didn't have slot machines wouldn't be good enough for this government so they are going to bring slot machines into the charity casinos. They're going to take their cut from that and, in turn, other charities are probably going to be losing money as a result.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Carleton has two minutes to wrap up.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** When it comes to gaming one is always struck by the holier-than-thou attitude that we hear from across the floor. I remember the Minister of Environment who was so adamantly against video lottery machines. He was the only Minister of Environment I have ever seen in the province of Ontario to introduce his own lottery: Cleansweep. The signs went up across the province that we were going to have this new lottery which was ostensibly to take care of the environment, but in fact the money was going to go to the central funds of the province of Ontario. The Minister of Environment didn't carry off the ripoff because he recognized that it wouldn't sell. As we went into the 1990 election, this was going to be his play.

I don't know how much credibility we give to the former Minister of Transportation, the member for Lake Nipigon. I didn't hear his concerns over addiction, over gaming with regard to the introduction of casinos in the province of Ontario. I, as a member of this Legislature for some period of time, had heard lectures from the member for Nickel Belt and the other members about their concern over Lotto 6/49. They were concerned about lotteries, the spread of lotteries, and how evil they

were. When they got in government, what did they do? They created casinos for the province of Ontario and they expanded gaming significantly. They took a huge amount of that money for the province of Ontario.

Lastly, the Leader of the Opposition: I find it strange that her argument is based upon the takeout of this. She's not concerned about the people who are betting; she's concerned about where the money goes. She's not concerned about the people who are going to be affected by this legislation, so I discount her arguments in total.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** Mr Speaker, before I start, I would like to ask for unanimous consent to divide the time allocated to the Liberal Party for its leadoff speech between myself and the member for St Catharines.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent? It is agreed.

**Mr Kennedy:** Also, I'd like to ask the consent of the House to permit the NDP to speak up to 30 minutes between the two Liberal speakers.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** I'm sorry, there's not unanimous consent.

**Mr Kennedy:** Mr Speaker, is that your ruling?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it agreed?

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** It is agreed.

**Mr Kennedy:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is not with great pleasure that I rise to address the House tonight, because what is left, as usual, to the opposition parties is to tell the real story of what the government has in mind in terms of the legislation that's been put forward. We wish this invasion of the video lottery terminals were only a bad B movie, because we're talking about not a few not-controlled environments, but 20,000 to 40,000 of these slot machines which will be in every neighbourhood of this province. They will be a form of hard gambling that we haven't really seen before in terms of what we've exposed people to out there in the general population.

What this legislation indicates is a number of qualities of this government that are really coming to the fore as it tries to scramble its way out of this session. This legislation is really about a government that is prepared to ignore the experience of many other jurisdictions and introduce what has been accurately and with a tremendous amount of supporting documentation referred to as the crack cocaine of gambling. What we have here in these mechanical devices is all of the allure of video games, with the same kind of attraction, particularly to younger people, and the addictiveness of any of the harder forms of gambling.

We have as well the unfortunate and the very first proximity of alcohol and gambling side by side, because it is very clear when people hear about this bill that the video lottery terminals we're talking about are headed for neighbourhood bars. This is the clear plan of this government, the clear intent of this legislation, and the very unfortunate characteristic the government chooses to display again tonight as it asks for the public's trust in essentially doubling the amount of gambling activity taking place in this province is to not provide the very



basic facts, figures and outlook that would allow the people of this province to judge the actions of this government.

Once again instead of the actual implications of what the government chooses to do, what we have is misdirection. We have indeed what others have called this government at other times, but most appropriately tonight, a shell game. What we're not being shown, what we're not being allowed to see is this dramatic increase in the amount of gambling taking place in the province.

For example, the Minister of Finance, in introducing this idea, spoke only about the money going to charities, would not deign to talk about the fact that the vast majority of the funds, some 78%, will be coming directly to government coffers. This is not about the money going to charity which was referenced, the \$180 million that he spoke about, which is only 10% of the take. If we look at that 10%, what that implies is \$2 billion worth of gambling activity. There may even be a requirement for more than 40,000 machines to be brought into this province in order to satiate the appetite this government has, which itself is now truly proving itself with this bill to be addicted to these weaker forms of acquiring money.

I think it is indeed a character flaw of this government being revealed very clearly in the choices it made as it put this bill together. In the instances of other jurisdictions in Canada, in the United States and elsewhere in the world, proof of the kind of insidious gambling addiction these machines can lead to is very documented and has been experienced by every jurisdiction that has brought them in. Yet we have this government unable to stand front and forward and say to us: "This is what we want to do. We're so desperate, our financial projections are so far off in terms of what we intended to do, that we need this money." As we can understand the gambling and other addictions that exist in society, we perhaps can begin to understand this government.

Just as on a similar issue this afternoon when the same minister introduced another bill and talked about the trust in this government, we learn instead that \$9 million worth of revenue that used to be collected by the government is being given back to deregulated industries. The minister stood up in this House to say he thought it would not be the case, only to be contradicted by his own staff in committee hearings.

We really have to wonder why it is this government won't provide the most elemental of facts in terms of its intentions with important pieces of legislation like this. What this will mean to average people out there is that gambling will have another and much more insidious form in which to touch their lives. What we're talking about here is a form of gambling that is hard gambling, that is very much more similar, in the views of people out there and in the experience of how it plays out for people, to horse racing and to other forms of hard gambling and has very little to do with the bingos and lotteries which people have come to associate as some kind of benign form of gambling.

What we have in terms of the experience of other jurisdictions shows that this government is taking on one of two characteristics, and there really isn't, in anything the minister said tonight, in any of the things we have in

the limited information the ministry has put forward, anything to contradict these two characteristics: that either we have a government unable to put forward its agenda, which has really only a Comic Book Revolution, 20 pages of things it would like to do but with no idea of how to get there — it smacks of a certain level of incompetence to believe this government would not draw on the experience of all these other jurisdictions that have been using this form of gambling for public revenue with tremendously mixed results, with now growing concern among the public and among governments. To believe this government wouldn't know that, wouldn't address that as it introduces this bill, is very alarming indeed, to think this is the quality of deliberation this government is capable of.

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The other feature which is possible in terms of explanation for the bill we have in front of us tonight is that this government deliberately intends to take this social cost, that this government has decided somewhere — we heard the minister refer tonight, and it's in his bill, to a 2% solution, when the rates of addiction that exist for video lottery terminals are now 5.5% in Alberta and higher in other jurisdictions. The government can create a whole new problem, which in terms of pathology is just like a different kind of disease, and then propose some inadequate treatment that will somehow salve its conscience.

What we have to hear from people across the province as this bill gets its consideration is how they're not willing to let the government get away with that kind of presumption. The very idea of doubling the amount being spent on gambling in this province inside of one to two years — the government also will not reveal its timetable, but when you look at the numbers, the minister, speaking to the *Toronto Sun*, spoke about an initial 8,000 machines, then a further 20,000 machines, which talks to us about a very, very rapid deployment of these bandits, called computer robbers, because that's what they end up being for the families and the individuals affected.

When we look at the experience elsewhere in the country, as recently as 1994 Alberta chose to cap the number of slot machines they put into their various establishments because of all the concerns that have started to come forward about addiction-related issues. When you hear the stories from that province, you really have to appreciate that this government either isn't willing to listen or simply didn't think hard enough before bringing in this legislation. I think the characteristic that is starting to really stick to this government is that perhaps it's both. Perhaps this government isn't really in touch with how to make some of these hard decisions and rather, instead, is taking the easy route every time. This government is unable and unwilling to look at the implications that its decisions have for the quality of life in our province.

We look at the experience, for example, in Manitoba. The Manitoba lottery policy review says that slot machines, even if they're in age-restricted areas, which is the only qualification this government is prepared to put forward at this time — it has to be a place existing in licensed areas that can be somehow restricted, and there's



no enforcement specified. The Manitoba lottery review said they're fully visible to youth, as attractive to youth as video machines, and there's nothing to be gained by that kind of particular regulation. Instead, you've got a generation raised on video games that you're now going to be going after for their scarce dollars.

The underpinning of what makes this a particularly pernicious initiative on the part of this government, why it really deserves everyone's attention, not just those in families who could be prone to be drawn in by these machines, not just those who have a general concern for the kinds of things happening in society, but in general, is that it represents an attack on people made desperate by this government. Unfortunately, various studies show an association between this form of gambling and people on reduced incomes, people with limited prospects. With that knowledge — we certainly have nothing from this government to say it has anything on the offsetting side of research, that it's done any studies, that it understands anything else about the impact — that this is the kind of attack that will happen, they are not only going to proceed with video lottery terminals on every street corner in terms of every neighbourhood bar, but they are going to promote their acceptance throughout the province and do it at a pace and at a rate that means that before anybody out there realizes it, we'll have this form of gambling among us.

This is not simply a game; this is far too serious for that, in terms of what is being debated here tonight. It is about a change in the kind of gambling we have. These machines have the ability to capture people's attention, as they did for a woman in Nova Scotia, whose husband became so upset with her obsession, in terms of how much of the family's income it was taking, that he was arrested for breaking up and destroying the video lottery machine that was the source of her entrapment. The Nova Scotia government in 1993 took two thirds of its slot machines out of the establishments they were in because of its concern.

We have various governments elsewhere acting in a direction completely the opposite of the measures the government is proposing and which we're discussing here tonight. Why didn't this government consult with Nova Scotia? After having talked about discussing with people around the province, after having given written assurances to all manner of groups which inquired that when it came to this electronic slot machine, when it came to this pernicious kind of gambling, it would take some time, it would look at what people were doing, why has this government decided to go ahead in such a hasty fashion? And why, indeed, is this government proceeding in a way that hides its true intent? Why can't this government come clean and say that this is what it has to do at this time, and get the proper public input in terms of understanding of what the government is doing? Instead, it hides behind charities, hides behind measures for licensed establishments which have nothing to do with its primary intent here.

The answer, I guess, is that the government is itself showing the characteristics of an addict. Like an addict, they're really clutching at straws in terms of their rationale for this. On the other side, for those of you who will

be speaking tonight, we would like to hear one good reason you would want to introduce this particular form of gambling to this province, beyond your need based on your miscalculation, based on your desire to give a tax cut in this province that you couldn't figure out how to finance.

There isn't anything else to explain going from a handful of electronic slot machines that exist in this province to 20,000, perhaps as many as 40,000, before the end of the next two years. There is nothing else that explains this government's actions than the pursuit of money and the pursuit of money in a certain kind of way and a certain kind of form that is as telling about this government as it is about the general problems we have for gamblers in this province that are about to be enlarged by the introduction of this legislation.

The government has decided to take the low route in terms of introducing this legislation, has decided not to talk directly about what its intentions are, because it knows that the result of an Angus Reid survey says that 54% of Canadians are against video lottery terminals, and that even though other jurisdictions have them, those that have had them longest are most against this. This government appreciates that if people really did realize what was coming to their neighbourhood, that there were going to be mini-casinos happening right in their own backyards, the government would probably have to withdraw the legislation. The government doesn't want to deal with the very real social problems attendant upon its decision.

We look at a single mother in Halifax who found herself in such an awful position vis-à-vis her addiction to VLTs, stealing from her place of business to finance her addiction, that she wanted to take an axe to the VLT and was only stopped at the last moment. Or look at a gentleman in Halifax, an unemployed cook, who lost \$40,000 and almost committed suicide because of his addiction to VLTs.

There is no dispute about the pernicious quality of this particular form of gambling. This is not fun, this is not gaming, this is about a decision by government to go after money from people who are particularly weakened in society. I think it would have to agree that some of that weakness has come from other measures this government has put forward in its first year in business.

When we look at the kind of problems it has brought for people in terms of their family life, in terms of putting their houses at risk, for many of them — and these are not exaggerations; these stories have been documented in all the inquiries that have taken place into the use of video lottery terminals across the country.

The jurisdiction of British Columbia decided not to have these things. British Columbia made a decision that this government isn't even prepared to ask itself. This government, unfortunately, is too afraid to even put the question: Do we want to go down this road? Do we want to take on a form of gambling that is demonstrated to hurt so many people, or do we want to do the responsible thing and take the time to understand these kinds of measures before they're put forward? This government is unwilling to do that. It's method of communication about this has shown that, and the basis for its legislation has shown that very clearly.



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Despite what it has said at every occasion it's been given, this government is not only going to put these into casinos where it already exists; it's going to put them in brand-new places called charity gaming houses and it's going to put them into neighbourhood bars where there's absolutely no control being exercised by the government. This is not about controlled environments. This is not about the government taking care in terms of how it introduces this form of gambling.

This is an out-and-out rapacious grab for money. There is nothing else that explains bringing gambling, and gambling of this particular variety, side by side with alcohol. That's what this government has done: It has decided to prey on people, not only in terms of their general state of desperation, but also when they're inebriated.

As other members have already put it, there is a certain kind of low being marked by this bill here today. There's a certain kind of tolerance and acceptance being shown by the members opposite in promoting this bill that we probably haven't quite seen the quality of in the other measures being put forward here today. But we have, in terms of the discussion this bill provides us, at least the chance to start to alert the general public out there of some of these qualities that are starting to manifest themselves at the just-beyond-one-year mark of this government.

Even many places in the United States — in Wisconsin they've decided not to introduce video lottery terminals in bars. They've made the decision not to have these slot machines in the neighbourhoods where they're more accessible to youth, where they're going to be outside any kind of control, any pretence of control by government. Wisconsin, which this government has cited for many other programs, has decided not to go down this path that the 81 members opposite have decided to trot down. In West Virginia, similarly, they've decided not to have video lottery terminals, and Nova Scotia has made similar decisions.

The reason they've done that is that some of them have actually come to terms with what is proving so slippery for this government to do, that is: What is the nature of government responsibility when it comes to a moral issue like this? Are there no limits to gambling? Is there nothing we want to do as legislators to stand up and say to people out there about how we want to impact the quality of their lives?

I think what we have to agree about on this particular issue is that the root of this is a government that wants taxes, despite what it said to people, but is too afraid to ask for them. It instead has to find another route to go, another route to take in money from society than it has gone before, and to do it with all these attendant risks. The checklist of things that exist for people: Compulsive gamblers — and this is the most compulsive form of gambling that's been identified — generally are members of society more likely to attempt suicide, to be part of family breakdown, to write bad cheques, to embezzle money, to do other crimes, to go bankrupt, to land in court or jail.

In other words, we invite, because of the short-term allure of this type of revenue generation, these associated

problems. When we do it in this fashion, I think we are showing a characteristic of the government and we're showing — and this is important for the rest of us to consider — a weakness on the part of the rest of us. If we indeed let this legislation go through, if we take this way of dealing with serious problems that deserve a much more serious response, if the only way we can come to terms with the gap between the public will to provide the revenue we need and in finding really effective ways to provide services is to introduce these kinds of things, then it is a low mark, I suppose, for the province as a whole.

The effort that will be made by this side is to ensure that if this province adopts this type of measure, this way of bringing in money, it will do so with its eyes open. The Addictions Foundation of Manitoba shows there has been a large increase in average spending since the introduction of electronic slot machines. As a perspective that's available to anybody out there, the people in Manitoba, since the introduction of this particular kind of gambling, spend more on gambling than they do on basic foodstuffs.

What we have is a change that talks not only about the morality of some of these things, but also about the practicality. This is drawing money from the health and wellbeing of people, and it's drawing money — and this is the other thing this government needs to take into account, because, as with a number of its other ventures it has introduced in the past year, it may find this to be a road not only that we shouldn't have gone on in the first place, but that leads to nowhere. Instead of coming up with new money for this government in terms of the money that goes into those video lottery terminals, those slot machines take money away from other discretionary spending.

What you've had in front of you — and it's very clear that the exact form this government is taking is a report by the restaurant and bar industry of this province. Once again, when we look for the source of an initiative, we find it not so much in the government benches but from some of their friends. This whole legislation, this whole approach in terms of how to market it, is that they've taken the temperature of people in Ontario and found that if they talk about the deficit at the same time, public support goes up marginally, and if they talk about charities, support goes up even more. These are the kinds of calculations that we can't even say this government has done on its own; they have been done for them, and they are slavishly following them right now.

If we look at the prospect of following in the footsteps of some of the other provinces, we really ought to be completely ashamed because of the consequences known there. An estimate comes out of Alberta that some 125,000 Albertans have become addicted in varying degrees to VLTs since they were introduced in that province a few years ago. In Manitoba, 1,400 people were treated for addictions to these slot machines last year, and that infers a rate of 14,000 people minimally. The resources available in Manitoba, where similar token gestures exist, are about the same as would be proposed here, and there aren't enough of them.



We're out to create a class of social problems we haven't seen before by way of accelerated compulsive gambling. We do it knowing. I'm sure, in terms of the information we've been able to find that was probably previously available to this government, had it made the effort, it's known that that is indeed what we're doing. This is not a bill about, as it is perversely named, advancing the public interest, but about stripping the public interest away in a very harmful way. We are not giving to the people of this province any level of decision-making any more about the legitimacy of their government in terms of where their dollars come from, but instead we're following that path of least resistance. That path of least resistance is one we have to be very concerned about.

The whole nature of government responsibility is what we're being shown here tonight: that this government is unable to come to terms with the exact thing it was elected to do some 13 months ago. Instead of finding ways to deal with the responsibilities of government, it has decided to take a route that only requires it to exploit weaker people in society. There's nothing else involved here.

I invite people out there, when they start seeing these slot machines, if we're not successful in stopping these slot machines from coming to every neighbourhood, to recognize that what they're really getting is a symbol for this government. They're getting a machine that employs nobody, that produces nothing and that is geared to take advantage of the very desperate people who have been produced by other measures of this government in the first place. There is no other way to describe the slot machines this government is purporting to put into every bar in this province.

We have to keep in mind that this addiction is only a beginning. We have to show ourselves, those of us who can be detached from the kind of blindness that has been shown on the opposite side, and have to be very clear that even the 20,000 to 40,000 of these machines that the government needs to meet its own revenue targets may not be enough and it may go down the route of some other jurisdictions. We had a promise from the opposite side that it would not introduce more of these machines than existed per capita in any other province. There are only 3,200 of them in Quebec, and this province will exceed that by at least double in its initial rollout of this machine.

We are not seeing any consistency from the government side. Pardon me: We are seeing consistency from the government side in terms of promises that fall by the wayside, and in this case in the face of the most crass expediency. We are indeed finding, if not an IQ test, then certainly a character test for this government in the legislation we have. When it comes to the hard gambling this represents, there simply is no ambiguity. When we look at the kind of experience that has existed in the States, they say that because electronic gambling machines are relatively inexpensive — they only cost about \$5,000 per machine — and need no supervision, they really are only money machines.

There's nothing else that can be said for this. This is not like some of the arguments that have been made. This

government has decided, for reasons, to prop up the racing industry in different parts of this province and has done that on a basis at least of certain levels of employment to that part of the gaming industry, to parts of the agriculture industry. There is none of that in these machines. There is nothing being generated in benefit for society. Instead, we've got mechanical hardship and pain, which is what these devices are going to dispense, along with a little bit of earnings they're going to give back to people as they take very high takes, as other members have said, away from people.

2140

What we found in South Dakota, where slot machines have existed for the longest period of time — and people need to get a conception of this — is that the largest percentage of people who spend more than \$50 a month are hooked on VLTs. For hard gamblers, that's their gambling of choice. The per capita losses ran about \$150 on average for each resident, just on those electronic gambling machines. That approximately represents the average we have in this province right now.

It is not exaggeration to say that these new slot machines coming to your neighbourhood are going to double the amount of gambling taking place in this province. That has to be a conservative estimate, because if you look at the experience in South Dakota, in 1991 it collected four times as much from these slot machines as it did from all of its lotteries. Lotteries in this province return to the government some \$645 million, but the capacity, the vile potential of these machines is to do four times that. The following year, the state collected nine times as much from these slot machines.

We see a government willing to get into this embrace with these machines at this kind of cost. It is willing, knowing that these machines are going to have a harmful effect, knowing that they are particularly opening up new vulnerabilities for people who are already vulnerable; it's prepared to proceed. When we look at the legislation, we look in vain for the kind of protections this government spoke of when it spoke of controlled environments; there are no protections.

The only thing this government will do is ask the people who dispense video lottery machines to register with the government. I can't imagine anything more passive than that. It's going to require, through the liquor licence laws, some degree of sanction on those establishments which have liquor licences. We will find ourselves with the same enforcement problems multiplied because of the kind of behaviours that have already been described which exist; that is, it'll be enforced by no one. Who will indeed enforce this and what kind of capacities will exist at the new bodies this government is talking about? Or will it fall back on other governmental bodies which are already, thanks to other measures of this government, hard pressed to provide that level of enforcement?

This is an exact epitome of the kinds of measures this government has been introducing all year long. They're only half-baked; there's no sense of taking responsibility. At least with this one, despite what we've heard from the opposite side, they are not going to be able to blame previous governments. The previous governments at least did their gambling in controlled environments where they



could speak of a level of government or government body supervision. That can't be the case with these video lottery terminals.

They're coming to your neighbourhood bar, and for all we know, once they're in your neighbourhood bar, as they did in Nova Scotia for a while, as they do in various parts of the States, they could be coming to your neighbourhood grocery store. There is no knowing because the limits do not exist in the legislation we're being asked to consider tonight. There is no staged introduction; there are no official numbers from this government. It is only when it's in conversation with the *Toronto Sun* and other important places in which it wishes to dialogue — not in this House — that it's prepared to table some of the numbers that start to give us an accurate picture about what this government is doing in its growing obsession with video lottery terminals.

We have the examples that exist from elsewhere. We understand that this is not simply about the kinds of problems — there was a statement from one of the members opposite that part of our dilemma was, how do we capture \$10 billion being spent on gambling in this province? Inherent in that statement was no sense of: Why do we want it? Why do we want gambling money to run the government? Why do we want to double gambling money to run the government? Why do we want to sanction that kind of activity? Is there no check and balance when you're faced with this particular government?

Why has that become the kind of question this government is afraid to ask? Why won't it ask itself that? We can sanction any manner of criminal activity taking place out there, we can look at any of the addictions that exist for people and exploit them further, but we're not prepared to put even the same sanctions in terms of these video lottery terminals that we put in terms of alcohol or other controlled substances. We're prepared to have people sit there and sit there. As long as they've got the money, they can continue to give the money away. Instance after instance exists all across Canada and in the United States of places where people have done exactly that.

We have a report from Alberta and the *Calgary Herald* of January 27, 1995. Gambling addicts appearing before a tribunal there talked about cashing in their RRSPs, taking second mortgages on their homes, getting maximum cash advantage on their credit cards just to feed their addiction. What you've seen there is that yes, finally there is some business created: for psychiatrists, for people who treat gambling addicts.

This is the only direction this government is headed in terms of any semblance of economic development: to create a pathology and then to create a very small and inadequate industry to deal with. What those people have learned in the treatment of this is very clear and it came from the psychiatrists' association in Alberta when it said to British Columbia, "Don't do this." I'm sure, honourable members, that if they knew what you were up to tonight, they would say the same thing to you, "Don't do this." Why do you want to go down this road? There's nothing to be gained there except — and this requires you to admit this — money at any cost for this govern-

ment without any check and balance. We see in Alberta and British Columbia that at least they've started to put limits. This government has put in no self-prescribed limit ahead of time. As I say, the only limit we've seen is that they're prepared to put these machines into rooms that can somehow be controlled for age. There's no specificity about that; it's not something we can rely upon.

Neither can we rely upon, as I've already indicated, the only other measure of restraint on the part of this government that it promised; not in the legislation, but it promised somewhere else that we might have the lowest per capita incidence. They've already violated that in exceeding Quebec in terms of the original intentions of this government, in terms of the revenue projections they're talking about. We are dealing with at least 40,000 machines eventually in province. That is not a government with a plan; that is a government with an out-and-out hunger for a certain kind of money.

As we address this debate, we have to talk about what this money means. This money means a government that is unable to do the very tough job that I suspect some of the people who cast their ballots in its direction thought it might be up to, and that's to reacquire for government some of the moral authority to get support to do what needs to be done in this province. That is simply a measure that this government is unwilling to take when it takes the easy route represented by what we have in front of us today. It's really that kind of consideration that everybody in the province needs to be aware of. There is no other basis under which we can understand the intent of this legislation.

When we look at the cost, there's a moral cost and there's an economic cost in terms of the money that's diverted from the kinds of expenditures that actually have a multiplier in society, that actually employ people. Gambling is simply a dead end. It's another form of tax because it goes directly into the government's pocket, and this government has shown that the purposes to which it's willing to use this particular measure of raising money have no limitation.

When we look at the diversion, it's going to happen not on a grand scale, it's going to happen right in those neighbourhoods. It may even happen in those same establishments, those that find the restaurant side of their bar and eatery no longer gets the same kind of business. It's going to happen in terms of the people who find themselves selling other kinds of goods in their community. Because this is a vacuum; it is like a vortex that collects up discretionary dollars.

This government has not one study to show that new dollars will be generated. It has chosen, in its presentation of this legislation, something that I find really quite disturbing, but unfortunately in the short time I've been here I've seen it repeated over and over again. When the government wants to do something that it's not prepared to talk about, it instead talks about a charitable initiative. When it wants to take money away from mothers and fathers to feed their children, it then talks about a charitable initiative of a breakfast program for less than 5% of the children who are affected. When this government wants to do other measures, it introduces a motion to



support a tax credit that only comes from the federal government in the name of supporting charities.

I can tell you as somebody who's run a charity that you're fooling nobody with that. It may play well to the general public, it may show a side that I believe exists on the other benches, but it's certainly not being expressed in the measures we hear being made in the name of charity. In the name of charity, this government made commitments before the last election that it would consult and talk to people in this province and thereby assess the implications. While this is being promoted as a great big boon to charities, what you have is this organization located in the same office as the Ontario March of Dimes, saying: "What's going on? What is this government doing? They said they would be looking at the implications of this and notwithstanding that, they're going ahead with this." This is a charitable sector, organized, that part of the charitable sector, that small part that depends on gaming revenue, saying to you, "What are you doing?" Hopefully, that question is starting to form in many minds across this province and you start to get some of those questions.

2150

I believe, honourable members, this is something that needs to tickle your conscience; it needs to find its way in on whatever way this has been rationalized in terms of your internal caucuses and discussion, to the extent that they've taken place. Because I think we find ourselves scrambling to explain, scrambling ourselves to be charitable with the kind of approach that you've taken here tonight, that when we see the amount of pain and hardship you're going to be inducing into this province, not by picking up on some pre-existing thing and trying to make it better, but simply by introducing these slot machines into every neighbourhood, that we see a bias. The bias is simply for a very narrow agenda; the bias is not to take responsibility for the actions that this government is initiating. We certainly find all of those characteristics in the legislation that's been put forward today.

When we look at the various implications of this legislation and this invasion of new forms of gambling, we want to put forward very clearly that the position of the Liberal Party is not to increase and not to make legal any of these video lotteries outside of casinos. What we want to see instead is this government come to terms with this addiction that is starting to show. We wish to act as the initial psychiatrist for this government. Just as it will create a tremendous amount of business out there for psychiatrists, we want to counsel it before it goes too far and we want to provide to this government that sets a perspective, that this is something it needs to get control of before it's too late. Just like an addict, it needs first of all to get in touch with the real world.

The real world that this government needs to deal with is the kind of world where it says it's going to balance the budget and still give away a tax cut. That isn't real, folks; instead, that's based on a lack of contact with reality. It's the kind of thing that leads you, perhaps in good faith, to believe that these measures you're introducing tonight somehow will not have a heinous effect on families, on individuals all across this province, that somehow you are unable to do what the government of

British Columbia decided to do when it initiated plans for 5,000 terminals in that province and after the kind of public response that it decided to go out and listen to and that it got, it changed its mind.

You too, ladies and gentlemen, can change your mind. This is something that is incumbent on this government to do in the face of what it's presented to us so far. This may be one of the worst pieces of legislation that has come out of this government, because it has not even the pretence of a rationale; there is absolutely nothing in this province that requires this particular form of legislation except a government that is unwilling to talk to the public in a clear fashion and say its financial plan doesn't add up.

I think it's very, very clear when its Minister of Finance says, as he said in this House a couple of weeks ago, that the amount of money being collected by these slot machines won't be significant for the deficit, and then we find that the government's own predictions show, to the extent that these are projections they're prepared to stand on, a minimum of \$400 million net that will be coming to this government — it could be easily as much as \$1 billion, and to get that \$1 billion there is a count we can't provide but which we and you can also assess the sense of, the sense that comes from hundreds and thousands of situations of pain and hardship, of additional criminal activity that takes place as people struggle to feed this new addiction.

This is a juncture at which this particular addiction doesn't exist in this province, and this is something the honourable members opposite and the minister will have to take full responsibility for, for changing that kind of complexion and for recognizing the particular environment in which they introduce it. This is an environment in which they've cut welfare by 22% for the poorest people in this province. This is an environment where they've created a huge degree of insecurity for people in average jobs. This is an environment where it's taken no initiatives to try and find better jobs for people and finds itself instead going along with the outsourcing that's taking place that busily brings down wages for individuals. Instead of really coming to terms with itself and its requirements, this government is trying to find the low road, the back way in. That's really the most unfortunate part of what we're seeing here today: the government is unable to have a generalized debate on these exact measures. It's not willing to put in front of us — I would challenge the minister to table the exact figures of how many machines it's prepared to do.

We see in the small print for this legislation a government that says somehow it's going to go to an outside agency to implement this. This government is so terrified to actually take responsibility for its actions that it's going to hire someone to do this for them. We've got to wonder which kind of gambling establishment, which kind of gambling centre will it have to do its dirty work in this case and how much more removal of our accountability will we get when that particular entity is put in place, because this is a measure for which this government should stand up, tonight preferably, and explain to the rest of us why it is doing it, when we had the minister speaking for only a very brief period of time, when



we have the minister not willing to share with us the very basic facts about this.

Does this government have studies to prove that there is an economic benefit to be had from this at all, or will it harm the charities that are currently engaged in gambling? Will it harm the neighbourhood establishments that will lose revenue because of the discretionary dollar that's going to go pouring into these slot machines? Will it harm the fabric of society in terms of the costs that it brings and the hardship? Why won't this government, when it's on the very verge of doubling the amount of gambling that's taking place in this province, introduce those studies? If those studies don't exist, why won't this government withdraw this legislation? Why will this government persist? Does it really, truly believe that somehow out there that mandate it received 12 months ago gives it that kind of disconnectedness from the public, that it's a mandate they don't have to exercise in this particular case some sense of moral questioning about what its measures are?

I want to say, because I know from the member opposite that they are leery of that kind of judgement from this side of the House — and it's not a judgement. It's simply particular to this case, that when we talk about doubling gambling there is a moral component to that particular decision. When we look at the basis under which this government is not prepared to come to terms with doubling not only gambling but probably tripling the hard gambling taking place in this province, because there's only a much smaller amount of revenue that comes from hard gambling right now — when it wants to make that decision, it should take the responsibility. Taking that responsibility means tabling the studies, tabling the figures of how it plans to roll this out and not hiding behind some nebulous entity that it won't even describe in terms of who's actually going to do the job of implementing video terminals in this province today.

No one opposite, no one else in the province, can hide behind the fact that it would like to take comfort that this government does in some way know what it's doing, can take comfort in the idea that this government is introducing this in a controlled fashion. There is no possible way the government can reach its revenue predictions. It's inherent in the legislation itself, in the references to the Liquor Licence Act, that these are headed for bars in your neighbourhood, and you should suitably be ashamed.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** I would like to thank the House for the unanimous consent that was granted in order to allow me to go in between the speeches of the leads of the Liberal Party. As most people would understand, we've been rather busy these last couple of days on leadership and I was hoping to get out of here at a half-reasonable time.

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** Your guy got in.

**Mr Bisson:** My guy got in.

Anyway, I want to thank members and I want to start off by saying, let me put on the record: I do not have an aversion to gambling. I think that is a fact of life. It is something that some people do. It's not for everyone. I don't have a problem with casinos. I quite frankly have not gone to one myself, either in Canada or the United States, but I understand many people in many commu-

ities across Ontario see that as a way of relaxation and a way of being able to spend some time of enjoyment. If they're able to do that within reason and not lose their shirt, as we might say, I don't have a problem.

I was listening to the debate a little bit earlier about people talking about the NDP government's move to introduce casinos in the province of Ontario. I voted for that in government, I want to put on the record, not because a government that I was a member of was putting that forward and the Premier told me to do so. I quite frankly don't have a problem with it. What I do have a problem with is where this legislation is taking us in regard to what I would consider to be one-armed bandits of the worst type. I would like to get into some of the reasons why and I'm going to be somewhat reasoned in doing so.

2200

The first thing I've got to comment on is the title of this bill. This government has a huge habit, every time it puts a piece of legislation together, that it gives it a title that is spun out by the spin doctors of the Conservative government.

**Mr Colle:** They're trying to hide something.

**Mr Bisson:** Exactly, that they're trying to hide something. I always worry about titles that read something like this. Members would know this, but maybe people watching the debate would not. This is Bill 75. In short, this bill does a couple of very important things. The first thing it's going to do, it's going to deal with the question of allowing the government to set up what they call VLTs, video lottery terminals, otherwise known as one-armed bandits, in licensed establishments that serve alcohol anywhere across the province of Ontario. I would think that the bill would talk about that in some sort of way. But what it says here is, "An Act to regulate alcohol and gaming in the public interest, to fund charities through the responsible management of video lotteries and to amend certain statutes related to liquor and gaming."

I guess the buzzword in here is this whole idea of funding charities through the responsible management of video lotteries. I want to come to some detail of that because I, as other members of this assembly would know — and we've done a lot of work as members in our own communities, working with charities, helping their applications before the gaming commission to be able to get a licence to sell Nevadas or a licence to run a bingo or whatever it might be in order to fund the work that they do within their communities. It is a very difficult thing, at best, to raise money within a charity, and really one of the big problems I've got with this legislation is, once you start allowing VLTs or one-armed bandits, as we might say, to be set up in competition with charitable organizations, you're really taking away from the ability of those groups to raise money, and I'll come to that in some detail a little bit later.

Let's deal with the first part of the act, because there are three basic parts to this act, and I'd just like to go through them in some kind of detail. The first part of the act establishes a commission. This commission will bring together what is called the Liquor Licensing Board of Ontario and the Gaming Commission of Ontario and put



it under one piece of legislation and put it under the auspices of one commission.

Are people opposed to trying to find ways to find efficiencies? I think all members of this House within all three parties would say no. If there's a way of doing that, if there's a way of bringing together the services of those various agencies under one roof and you can save a buck, not a bad idea. But I have some real problems in regard to what this is going to mean to the employees of those particular agencies.

What did the government do back in the fall of 1995? They passed a piece of legislation called Bill 7. There are no more successor rights. The employees who work at the LLBO and the employees who work at the gaming commission have no assuredness within the law that they will have some dibs at the jobs that will be created under this new gaming commission.

I understand that the government doesn't like public sector employees. Really, this is what this is all about, and I understand that the government believes that the private sector can do it better and they have a certain philosophy of doing things. But certainly, if we're talking about common sense, there has to be a certain amount of common decency as well. You have employees who have worked within those agencies for years, they have done so in good faith, they have done the job to the best of their abilities and I would say probably better than most people would out of the private sector, and they are being rewarded for those many years of service possibly by looking at a pink slip, not because there's a reduction in size, but because the government will have the possibility of, when the commission is created, not taking employees from the LLBO and from the gaming commission.

I say, shame on the government. If the government is going to do this, whatever amount of employees are left over, we should try in some kind of way to bring the employees of the LLBO and the employees of the gaming commission into this new organization.

I notice that the member for Etobicoke — I always call him the member for Bedrock, but he's the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale — is looking at me a bit quizzically, but the point is that these people have worked for the government, which you are a member of, for many years, worked under our government and worked under the Liberal government before that and they should be allowed a certain amount of decency. One of the big problems I've got, along with a lot of other people in this province, is that loyalty of employees to the government is basically out the window. The government is saying: "We will turn our backs on those employees and we gave ourselves the right to do that under Bill 7." They've given themselves the right to do that under Bill 26 in some cases and it looks like they're going to do that under this piece of legislation.

Those employees who are under the auspices of OPSEU at the gaming commission, and the employees under the liquor control board union, working at the LLBO, and the members of AMAPCEO within the management groups might find themselves in a very tough situation as a result of this legislation and seeing their jobs being gone and not having the ability to work at the commission. I think that is wrong and I think the

government should address that. If you're going to move forward and you're going to bring those commissions together, we understand that; you want to find some efficiencies, okay, fine, but let's do that in some kind of a way that we're able to bring people into that new organization from the existing one.

Further on in the bill there's a really interesting — and the member for St Catharines is going to like this one — part of this legislation. It's under subsection 3(3) of the bill. Listen to this. It reads: "The commission shall exercise its powers and duties in the public interest and in accordance with the principles of honesty, integrity and social responsibility."

A couple of things come to mind when I hear that one. The first one is, I think the government's worried. I think the government itself is recognizing in this legislation that one of the big difficulties with video lottery terminals is it's a cash business. Did you know something? A cash business means to say that it's a business where people will put money into the slots and there are no receipts issued. The reality is, there are all kinds of possibilities for all kinds of things to happen in regard to fraud or not reporting income on the part of the people who run these pieces of equipment. The government is concerned about that and it has showed that within the legislation.

The other point is that it's the first time that I've seen this government, in the year that it's been elected, where it's actually used those three words anywhere. What you've got is a government that in the race to drive its economic agenda forward, that is going to favour a few people within our society, and because it will benefit some at the upper-income scales, they have done so at a time and at a cost of pushing people down and out of the system so that if you're at one end of the system and you happen to have a few bucks and you happen to have a bit of power, you will do well and you will benefit under the Mike Harris Conservative government. But if you're at the other end of the income scale, or if you're somewhere in the middle as middle-class earners somewhere in the province of Ontario, you stand to lose under this government.

What they are doing in this legislation that I find quite interesting is to talk about social responsibility — this from a government that has not taken any social responsibility since it got here and, in fact, has gone quite the opposite way in regard to how it deals with its responsibility as a government. We have seen, time and time again, the government introduce legislation in this House that has done that, that has gone opposite to the ability of the government to make sure that the needs of people are properly dealt with, and that programs are put in place and kept in place in order to deal with people and their needs.

We are seeing everything from rape crisis centres close down — I ask members of the assembly, is it because there are no longer issues of rape in the province? I would think probably not. I would think that activity still goes on, but the government has decided that it will close rape crisis centres and counselling centres for women across the province of Ontario. I just find it interesting that the government in this legislation would utilize the words "social responsibility," and I say again, a govern-



ment that has not taken this particular piece of its legislation to heart in anything that they've done up to now.

The other thing that this particular section deals with which is interesting, clause 3(4)(a) reads, after that it will establish a commission using the principles of honesty, integrity and social responsibility:

"(4) The board of the commission shall,

"(a) inform and advise the minister with respect to matters that are of an urgent, critical or relevant nature...."

I have sat in this House for the last three weeks with every other member of this House where the member for London Centre, Marion Boyd, has raised day after day in this House the question of ministerial responsibility on behalf of the minister responsible for corrections. Every day the member for London Centre has stood in this House, along with other members of my caucus and then later on the Liberal Party getting involved, with the minister who is responsible for the safety and the care of the people within his institution, and all the way through the minister has said, "I know nothing, I see nothing and I do nothing." Then I stand here in this House and read this legislation, and it says in their own legislation that they will "inform and advise the minister with respect to matters that are of an urgent, critical or relevant nature." I find these words in your legislation passing strange when you have a habit as a government where ministers of the crown take responsibility for absolutely nothing.

2210

We have a situation in our corrections institutions where an incident has happened where we know for a fact that the minister should have been advised, according to all of the due processes that are set out in the ministerial system that exists within corrections, and I would suspect the minister knows but is not saying anything because he decided not to take action because he wanted to side with the police in this particular investigation. I would also suspect that the minister basically was not being very — I can't use the words. Some would say that the minister might not have been truthful in his response to the House — not myself, Mr Speaker, but I think other people might have said that. I find it passing strange that in a piece of legislation, they would turn around and they would say that the board and the commission shall "inform and advise the minister with respect to matters that are of an urgent, critical, or relevant nature" when the minister of corrections cannot be advised or says that he's not advised or says that he doesn't know or he hasn't heard absolutely anything in regard to what's happened at London-Middlesex or at the other institution.

It's here in the legislation. I'm not making this up. This is what they put in here. *Moi, j'en reviens encore à la question : quand on prend le temps, comme le ministre M. Sterling a fait, de dire dans sa législation ici, dans l'article 3, qu'on va informer et conseiller le ministre sur les questions urgentes, critiques ou pertinentes qui exigent l'attention du ministre, pourquoi ne prend-on pas ces pratiques-là comme gouvernement ? Moi, j'imagine que c'est peut-être parce que le gouvernement ne veut pas prendre ses responsabilités ou que le ministre essaie de nous faire croire que lui-même n'a rien fait et qu'il ne connaît rien et que ce n'est pas de sa faute et qu'il va*

*blâmer tout le monde, toutes les autres personnes dans la fonction publique.*

I say it's just indicative of the government, because any time something goes right, they're the first ones to run out and say: "We did it. We take all the credit and responsibility. Boy, if something's happened in the economy that's positive, it's us that did it." But the minute something goes wrong, as we've seen in this particular issue, the ministers are the first ones to try to blame the civil servants or somebody else for what might have been a foulup within their ministry. I say you may as well get used to it. You're the government. You're the guy with the chauffeur-driven limousine. You're the fellow with the big office at the ministry office. As Harry Truman once said, the buck stops there.

**Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton):** Who's got a chauffeur-driven limousine? Come on, give us some names.

**Mr Bisson:** Well, we know that you don't have a limo because you're a parliamentary assistant. You're not allowed a limo as a parliamentary assistant. Anyway, enough of that one.

I would just say again that if you're going to put something into legislation as a government and you're going to say that it is the responsibility of the civil service and others to inform and advise the minister with respect to matters that are of an urgent, critical and relevant nature, you would at least take the time to practise what you preach when it comes to those particular words.

Moving on to the second part of the legislation, the Liquor Licence Act, I guess the minister can take it as advice, a friendly suggestion, in regard to existing problems within the legislation. If we're going to open up the Liquor Licence Act, I would ask that the minister take a look at two issues — issues, I imagine, that have been raised in other constituencies, not only in my own. One is the issue of carryover permits when an existing establishment that sells liquor closes down for whatever reason and a new owner or a new person who takes over the establishment tries to reopen and get a carryover permit. Presently within the legislation, what we're permitted to do within a certain time period is to get a carryover permit to allow the new owner to take over the business and not have to worry about having to be closed down and running through all of the posting procedures to be able to get a new liquor licence to serve liquor in the establishment that's been taken over.

I can tell you, as the member for Cochrane South, having dealt with various applications from Timmins, and I would imagine government members and other opposition members have seen the same, that the carryover permit part of the legislation has problems in it. There are certain circumstances where they will not allow a permit to carry over. The poor person who happens to take over the business invests a lot of money to be able to come in and take over the business — \$20,000, \$30,000, \$50,000, \$60,000, depending on the size of the establishment — thinks that he or she is going to get a liquor licence because there was already a licensed establishment there with a liquor licence, and because the former employer, the former owner, didn't pay the retail sales tax or for other particular reasons, the permit is not transferred over.



Then it gets into a big shemozzle trying to fix that, with all the time — they're sending candies across the House to each other here.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bisson:** Slot machines — exactly. But what ends up happening is the carryover permit is held up and the person is not able to deal with the question of getting that permit. I would ask that the government look at the carryover permit section of the legislation in order to deal with that.

The other issue to take a look at is in regard to liquor licence application. The government talks about red tape, and the government talks about trying to move through the process issues of being able to reduce red tape. This is one area that we should be looking at. You know as well as I do, as members, because I'm sure by now after a year you must have had somebody in your constituencies who wants to start up a liquor establishment or wants to start up a restaurant, having to wait an enormous amount of time to be able to get an application. It is not because the LLBO doesn't do its job; it's not because the bureaucracy is not good; that's not the issue. The legislation itself is fairly rigid in regard to how long we have to post, how long it has to take. There are guidelines set out about how long the whole process has to take.

In fairness to the people who drafted the legislation originally, yes, you want the community to know a new establishment is coming in; you want to allow people to have the opportunity to comment; you want to make sure that there's good public discussion about a new establishment coming into place. But there has to be a better way of doing it in regard to the legislation, trying to tighten up some of the time lines.

The other issue is, I have one particular case right now in my riding, where there was a clubhouse at our local United Steelworkers hall on Mountjoy Street, where the existing establishment closed down and never reopened for a period of two or three years, and the new owner, Mr Toal, who's tried to open up a new establishment, had to go through that entire process because it was considered a new business. The bar ran for years. It was there for 20 years. Nobody ever complained over the period of 20 years of having that establishment, but he had to wait the whole period of the process to get a new licence, which was a very big inconvenience for him in regard to being able to move forward with his business venture. I would ask the government to take a look at that.

Let's get to the crux of the legislation. I just wanted to put those comments on the record. They're issues that the constituents have raised with me; and whenever you get an opportunity as a member, I think it is our responsibility to bring forward those issues when we get the chance to do so.

Let's deal with the question of what this bill is really all about. What this bill's about simply is this: The government is having to give people a tax break. They promised in the election of 1995 that if they were elected, they were going to give people a 30% tax break, and all would be well after people get that tax break; and they're delivering. The government, in the budget of 1996, has brought forward the first part of that tax break.

But where the problem lies is how they're going to pay for it. So the government is scurrying around trying to figure out where it can make a buck. The government, quite frankly, is coming over with one-armed bandits, or slot machines as they might be called, to be able to find a way to pay down the money that they're losing on the tax break. I say to the government, we shouldn't be mincing words here; we should be fairly clear, be straight.

We as an NDP government put in place casinos. Why? Because we needed the revenue. It wasn't a policy decision that we were in favour of gambling or not in favour of gambling or we wanted to do whatever. The issue was that as a government we needed to find ways to make revenue. The government brought forward the possibility of doing that through legislation, and we set up the first casino, which has turned out to be a very big success in the city of Windsor. It has meant literally thousands of jobs for the people in that community; it has meant a huge increase in revenue possibilities for the businesses in that community with the trade that comes in from people who come in to play the casino and, as well, it's been a good investment for the province of Ontario. With the casino being set up, the government didn't have to increase taxes as much as it would have needed to if it hadn't done that.

So why don't you be clear? The Tories are doing this. Why? Because you gave a 30% tax cut and that you as a government are giving people a tax cut and trying to find a way to make money. But the problem is, when you get into these slot machines, I think you're creating a whole bunch of other problems that are really going to deter from what your intentions are in regard to revenue generation. You are going to be going into direct competition with charities in our communities: the people at the local church halls that do bingos in order to raise money and in order to be able to pay for some of the charitable work that they're doing in our communities; the various community organizations there that utilize Nevadas to be able to pay their way, to be able to help everything from community sports organizations, kids' hockey teams, baseball teams; the various activities that might go on in regard to the work that various charitable organizations are doing.

You are going into competition with them, and the reality is that there is far less money in our communities now than there was a year ago. People don't have the disposable income, quite frankly, that they had a year ago. Why? Because a lot of people have lost their jobs over a period of time.

2220

The government likes to tout that it's created new jobs. Yes, you've created some jobs at seven bucks an hour and there's not a lot of disposable income left. But the point is, you know as well as I do — and go and talk to your charitable organizations in your communities, talk to the people who are dealing with Nevadas — the numbers are going down. If the government allows individual bars in the city of Timmins to put slot machines in, that means to say money that would have been put in a Nevada box or money that might have been paid at a local bingo hall or money that might have been in some sort of charitable gaming is going to go to that slot machine.



In the zeal for you to get your dollars to pay your tax break, you're taking away the money from the charitable organizations, at the same time that this government is cutting on the other end in regard to the money that it spends on its own programs. Mike Harris and the Conservative government have said often: "We want people to do things on their own. We think that we should give people a hand up. We think that we should allow communities to find their own solutions to be able to move in where the government has left." If you really mean that, why are you moving into competition with these people? That is my biggest problem with this legislation.

People are going to play slot machines in Nevada; people are going to play slot machines in a casino. I understand that. It's a contained area. The person is going there specifically to that community to do that action of going to a casino. It's a bit of a different situation. I don't have a problem putting a slot machine in a casino. But if you start allowing slot machines to go into places like the Balmoral Hotel and the Senator Hotel and whatever other establishment out there, it means to say —

**Mr Colle:** Where are those hotels?

**Mr Bisson:** In Timmins. It means that people in my communities —

**Mr Jim Flaherty (Durham Centre):** The Senator?

**Mr Bisson:** The Senator Hotel; you probably have stayed there, wonderful establishment. But the point is — I'm making a point. Maybe I can do advertisements here in the House. But the point I'm getting at is that once the government allows those establishments to go into the business of having slot machines, it means to say people in my community, who are no different than anywhere else in North America, are going to use those slot machines. Rather than putting the money in a Nevada box or putting the money in a charitable bingo, for somewhere to go on a Tuesday or Wednesday night when the bingo's going, they might go to that slot machine. That money could be better spent in our communities on those charitable organizations because they're doing the work that your government is asking them to do in the first place. I think the government should come to terms with that.

Up to this point, when it comes to charitable gaming, the only revenue that government has made in charitable gaming has been in the licensing. The government has never moved in this province in saying, "We want a cut of the money that the charities are going to be making in the province of Ontario," but that's what you're doing with slot machines. You're going to be taking 50% of the revenue of those slot machines to the provincial coffers and that means to say there's going to be far less money within our communities across Ontario to be able to raise the money they need to sustain the activities they do as charitable organizations.

I say to the government, you're wrong. I don't have a problem with slot machines in themselves. I'm not going to sit here and be holier than thou when it comes to slot machines. I've never played one before; I haven't been to a casino. I might at one point, I'm not opposed to it, but I think there is a time and there's a place for everything. I think slot machines rightfully belong in a casino. That's where they should be. That's where they can be con-

trolled. People who go to Windsor to the casino are going there for a particular reason. It's a bit of a different situation.

But I'm telling you, in our communities, everywhere from Sarnia to Lambton to Timmins to Iroquois Falls or to Kenora or Sudbury, wherever it might be, those communities are hurting now. Those communities are really trying to deal with how this government's agenda is dealing with people. There are people in my community, like yours, who are a lot worse off since you've come to government. That's a reality. Their welfare has been reduced. You can't say that's not true — 22% reductions. I can tell you, in communities such as mine there are fewer good jobs being created as compared to \$7-an-hour jobs. People have less money. Those charitable organizations are filling the gap as best they can for those people, because they can't rely on government because of what you guys are doing. You're saying at the same time that you're going to go into competition with charitable organizations. I say to you, that is wrong. You shouldn't be doing that.

The other point that is interesting is that the government I think is admitting that there is a real problem of addiction when it comes to slot machines. We call these the crack cocaine, I think is the term that people utilize —

**Mr Colle:** The crack cocaine of gambling.

**Mr Bisson:** Yes, the crack cocaine of gambling. It's not without a reason. Let's understand that a lot of this is addictive. One of the reasons I don't choose to go to casinos is that I know myself. If I were to walk into a casino and start to play a slot machine, I would probably empty the rest of the money I've got into it because I tend to be a fairly compulsive person.

The thing is that there is a problem when it comes to addiction on these things; you can't say not. I think the government is admitting it. Sure there's a compulsion part to —

**Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** There are slot machines in Windsor.

**Mr Bisson:** I'm not saying otherwise. I'm saying the difference is —

**Mrs Marland:** That's different.

**Mr Hardeman:** You opened it.

**Mr Bisson:** Just listen to the argument. The government has its time; this is our time. I'm not opposed to slot machines overall; what I'm saying is that you have to admit there a problem of addiction even in casinos. What's happening is that I think the government is recognizing in its own actions, by diverting 2% of the revenue over to a program to deal with addiction and compulsive gambling, that there is a problem. I'm just saying to the government that you have to look at that. Do we want to enter into a time in the province of Ontario where a person can walk off the street and play a slot machine at the corner hotel? Do we want to go down that route?

One of the members is shaking his head yes. I'm saying no, I don't want to go that way. When it comes to the question of gambling, you want to control that fairly well. Why is it that years ago in the province of Ontario, for example, as across the rest of this country, we



decided to set up liquor control boards? We wanted to deal with the question of how we dispensed alcohol within our society because we didn't want to make it a free-for-all. We said: "We recognize there is a problem with alcohol. Yes, there are people who can drink responsibly and people who can't. Somehow we have to control that to a certain extent."

If the government takes a policy direction and decision of saying, "We're going to allow slot machines to go anywhere in the province of Ontario," we're getting into a very difficult situation. "Situation" might not be the right word, but we're getting into a very strong possibility that people are going to really have a problem in utilizing these machines in excess of what they actually should.

I say to the government that I will vote against this legislation not because I'm opposed to gambling; I'm not opposed to gambling. I like to play cards with the best of them. I won't do it in a casino, though.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bisson:** Well, I don't know if that's right. Anyway, the point is that I'm not opposed to gambling as such, but I am opposed to what the government is doing by moving slot machines into the communities and allowing money to be diverted from charitable organizations into government coffers at a time when the government itself is cutting dollars to those community organizations.

In the communities of Matheson, Iroquois Falls and Timmins, which I represent, the community charities will have a much more difficult time once this legislation is put in place. I want to put on the record that I am opposed to this on the basis of what it's going to do to the charities within these communities.

I would also ask that the government take a look at the question of carryover permits under the Liquor Control Act and also the length of time it takes to move applications through the system.

With that, I would like to thank the members for giving me the opportunity to participate in this debate. I look forward to the government's response.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Questions or comments?

**Mrs Marland:** Is "forked tongue" or "doubletalk" unparliamentary? I don't think "doubletalk" is unparliamentary; "doubletalk" certainly isn't unparliamentary. I have just heard a beautiful example from the member for Cochrane South of exactly what doubletalk is. You're saying that you're very concerned about the impact of gambling, even to the point that you made a comparison of the addiction to crack cocaine to the addiction to gambling. If it wasn't such a serious subject, it would almost be humorous to hear you make that comparison, because I can assure you that if you went out on the street now and you offered to take the first crack cocaine addict you came across for a game of poker, a game of cards or a game of dice or something else, do you think he'd accept that rather than his cocaine? The degree of dependency and addiction isn't comparable, I would suggest to you.

However, I would suggest to you that our government is showing responsibility for people for whom gambling

is an addiction. Whether or not we legalize it, it is an addiction, and we are allocating 2% of the profits to help those people, which is 100% more than you did when you brought casinos into this province. You as a member stood in this House and voted in favour of casinos and yet tonight you stand here and you're stating your concern for the charities. You didn't do anything about the fact that of the \$100 million that is collected every year from Monte Carlo nights in this province, supposedly in the name and in aid of charities, only \$12 million actually reaches the charities. We are going to establish permanent charity sites.

2230

**Mr Colle:** I'd like to commend the member for Cochrane South for a very thoughtful overview of the impact of these slot machines. He's right; in all the literature, whether you look at the Edmonton Journal or the Winnipeg Free Press, the Globe and Mail, they refer to the VLTs as the crack cocaine of gambling. It's surprising that the member opposite doesn't realize how addictive these machines are, and maybe that's the problem, that the members opposite haven't done their research, they haven't seen the impact of these machines.

They are as deadly as crack cocaine. They are highly addictive, to the point of being almost mesmerizing for people, and they're making the most vulnerable people in society possible addicts to these machines. They will ruin a lot of young people, they will ruin a lot of families, as the member for Cochrane South said, because it's the most vulnerable in society, the most prone to addiction who will be brought to these machines, the people who have no defence. They will be the ones caught in the web of the crack cocaine of gambling, the video lottery terminals.

I hope the members opposite will investigate the impact of these machines and the impact they've had on people all over the world where they've been introduced. They are horrific. They do not allow any leeway for people who are victimized by these machines, which not only hurt individuals; they hurt families, they hurt neighbourhoods. This government has the audacity to put one in every restaurant and bar in this province. They are dealing with a devil with these machines.

**Mr Flaherty:** I listened with interest to the speeches from the member for York South and the member for Cochrane South and the context in which they spoke about ulterior motives by our government and the impact of machines. They neglect to mention of course that every province in Canada has these machines except for British Columbia and this province, to attribute those same ulterior motives and that same lack of caring I gather to all of the provincial governments in Canada except for Ontario and British Columbia so far.

It should be noted also with respect to this legislation that there is an amendment to the Ontario Casino Corporation Act that allows revenues from Casino Rama near Orillia to flow directly to the first nations' fund rather than through the government's consolidated revenue fund. This will facilitate our government's commitment to the creation of a fund that will benefit all members of Ontario's first nations.



I'm pleased, in response to the comments by my friends opposite, to have the opportunity to support the bill and the controlled introduction of video lotteries for the benefit of charitable organizations across Ontario as well as for the benefit of the horse racing industry in this province. The strengthening and rationalizing of the regulations regarding gaming activities and alcohol service will provide the necessary enforcement and support to make this initiative successful.

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** I commend the member for Cochrane South for a very thoughtful and provocative speech. He outlined quite well the nature of the issues at stake. The member for Mississauga South of course said, "When you were in power you did this" — tit for tat. The question I think he was asking was: Have you done your homework? What kind of research have you committed yourself to and what are the impact studies?

It would be like saying that we're going to put a certain chemical into the drinking water of a particular municipality, but as long as there's only 3% or 5% who will be adversely affected, it will be all right.

The point is, how far do you have to go? You have to go to such an extent that before you know it, this government will be handing out portable, hand-held slot machines to gamble away the resources you have, and the literature suggests that this is dangerous. When you talk about the motivations of all the other jurisdictions, look at all the other jurisdictions. Almost every one of them has somehow relinquished the full extent of their implementation. They've taken a second look at it. They've withdrawn them from certain facilities, and we're merrily moving ahead. Why? Because it's being driven by a frenzy to find resources.

What happened to the soul of this party that said they had family values? They said they were worried about family, they said they were worried about young people, and now all of a sudden they turn the other eye because we need money, money, money, money. I suggest to you, and mark my words, that you will be modifying this after the fact when you see the impact this will have on a lot of people who will lose those resources.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Cochrane South has two minutes.

**Mr Bisson:** I'd like to thank the members for Oakwood and Ottawa Centre for their comments. I especially liked the comment at the end. It is a very good point. This government has sort of lost its whole idea of family values, because, quite frankly, that does play into this. It's an angle I had not thought about.

I want to say to the member for Durham Centre, he talks about how everybody else in Canada is doing it, so why shouldn't we do it, and we should follow their example. We looked at this as a government when Bob Rae was the government of Ontario. We looked at this as a possibility for raising revenue in the province of Ontario. We recognized that it might raise as much as \$1 billion a year, depending on how you implement it, but we decided against it even though the revenues were high. Why? Because we recognized that (a) there is an addiction problem; (b) it does lead to the questions of petty crimes within the communities and various elements

getting involved with this that we wouldn't want to have involved, from organized crime and others. The other thing is the whole question of what it does to charitable gaming. We, as a government, said the price is too high. You have to be able to balance off the public good against your need to be able to raise dollars.

I would say to the member for Durham Centre only this: I would much rather see you stopping the tax cut as a way of dealing with your financial problem than moving forward with video lottery terminals, otherwise known as slot machines.

I just say to the member for Mississauga South, her rationale was that I voted for casinos and I'm now voting against video lottery terminals. If the member for Mississauga South is listening, I would just say I remember very well the member for Mississauga South, along with the entire Conservative caucus, voting against the introduction of a casino in Windsor, and at this time she stands in this House and says to me, holier than thou, that she's now going to vote in favour of putting in place video lottery terminals. I say to the member for Mississauga South, you sure can pick your times and opportunities maybe a little bit better.

**Mr Bradley:** I would ordinarily say I appreciate the opportunity to speak on a piece of legislation. Tonight I do not, because I was hoping we would never see from this government a piece of legislation which would allow for the widespread introduction of video lottery terminals or electronic slot machines in the province. I was hopeful that this government, which had members in opposition who spoke vehemently against many forms of gambling, would not have embarked upon what I consider to be a very unwise course of action on the part of this or any government.

I well recall the speeches in the House. I admired Ernie Eves, my friend from Parry Sound, when he sat just a few seats away from where I am and made some outstanding speeches on casino gambling in this province. I well remember Mike Harris, now our Premier in this province, making similar speeches and indicating a great concern about governments gathering funds by means of gambling ventures, particularly new and different gambling ventures on the part of the government. So with the words of Ernie Eves and Mike Harris, our present finance minister and our present Premier, I was somewhat assured that we would not have video lottery terminals introduced in this province.

In fact, I remember being asked by members of the news media, because the budget was upcoming, whether I thought the government would be introducing video lottery terminals, because I know considerable pressure was being put on the government by the hotel and restaurant association in Canada, specifically the Ontario division of that. I indicated at the time that my best guess was, particularly from the words of the Treasurer not a few weeks before that, and the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism, Mr Saunderson, that the government would not be doing so. I was very hopeful that that would indeed be the case, and I would have commended the government on that. In fact, I was complimentary of those members today on the govern-



ment side who have advocated against this extension of gambling in our province in years gone by.

2240

I think of the people who ran on the family values platform, some of the members who in their campaign literature talked about how important family values are. I agree with those people that they are important, and I wonder how they can justify supporting this piece of legislation which eventually allows the introduction of video lottery terminals, these electronic slot machines, into bars and restaurants in your neighbourhood across Ontario. It seems to me that the same people who speak out on other moral issues have an obligation to speak out on this particular issue if they are to be consistent. I've not seen that happen, though I know the debate will allow for others to speak and perhaps some of those members who have expressed strong moral views on a number of issues coming before us will in fact speak on those issues, and I will be very pleased to hear from them.

This provision for video lottery terminals has been placed in the bill where it's disguised. You have to know what the government's up to in this bill. There should have been two separate bills. We could have debated the merits of one bill which dealt with certain regulatory and administrative changes with the Liquor Licence Board of Ontario and the Ontario Lottery Corp and putting boards together. We could have talked about that, debated it on its merits. Unfortunately, what the government has chosen to do is bury this, or attempt to bury it, in this piece of legislation. I think if it merited that much in terms of praise, the government would have had it in a separate piece of legislation.

The excuse that the government uses — and I hear government members now repeating what the Treasurer has said, as though somehow they can have no thoughts of their own. They simply repeat that, well, there are all of these illegal video lottery terminals across the province, so why don't we legalize and control them? I think there is a fair comparison. There is crack cocaine out there that's illegal and that's purveyed by many people. It's illegal to sell it, it's illegal to use it, and I happen to agree with that. But just because it is illegal to use or sell it and it's widespread doesn't mean the government should take over that business, get into the business and make a profit from it and somehow legitimize it. So I don't think that argument's a strong one at all.

All the government has to do is simply enforce the laws of this province. The Solicitor General is in the House tonight. He and I have agreed on many things in our years gone by, and that is on strong enforcement of the laws we have in this province. What the government has done instead is abdicate its responsibilities.

The other problem I see with this is — I want to go into a bit of a history of gambling in the province. I remember my good friend the former member for St Catharines-Brock: before that, Brock; I think before that, Lincoln. My friend Bob Welch was probably the minister of tourism and culture at the time lotteries were introduced. I know him well and know he wasn't particularly a great fan of lotteries to begin with, but it was considered in the beginning that a Wintario ticket would be \$1 and it would help to elicit matching funds from others

in our community. The government, in other words, would invest \$1 and the volunteer sector would invest \$1. But this began to escalate. We changed; we had different kinds of lotteries. The payout became greater, the attraction became greater, and then it started to be instant lotteries, where I'm told you scratch and win immediately.

So what we're seeing even in the beginning is an escalation of gambling activities. It would start out as something fairly innocent. The Wintario fund started to escalate. We then get from lotteries into offtrack betting. Again, offtrack betting seemed to be pretty attractive to some people, but what it did was it gave more opportunity for people to gamble.

I remember making a speech in this House a couple of years ago about the effect of offtrack betting on a certain restaurant or tavern I knew of in my own community. I was not very complimentary, because what I pointed out was that the people who at that time were frequenting the offtrack betting weren't the regular customers. They weren't spending the money on food or on beverages and they weren't the big-time tippers with the waiters and waitresses in that restaurant. I remember getting a call from the owner, who was rather annoyed with my comments in the House, but what happened was, about a month and a half later the owner asked that the offtrack betting be removed, because the owner understood that was what was happening. He lost the good customers, lost the people who were buying the food and the beverages and giving the good tips to the employees. That restaurant has come back very strong, has a good clientele, and I think the owner is probably happier now. So that was another escalation.

Then we had casino gambling. Some of my colleagues in the House, of all parties, think casino gambling is fine. I don't. But just as I accept today that there are lotteries in this province and that's the way things are, I accept that we now have offtrack betting, though I don't like offtrack betting. I accept that we have casinos, even though I don't like the casinos. Some of my colleagues did; some of my colleagues did not.

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** What about bingo?

**Mr Bradley:** The member asks about other things. There are other minor forms of gambling that take place in various halls in the province, but I don't think it's a fair comparison to use those. The payouts aren't as great, they're not as insidious, it's not as instant as this.

I found casino gambling to be rather repulsive, because I knew it was yet another escalation. It was a more attractive form of gambling. Go into any one of these casinos, I'm told, and if you want to find the people who shouldn't be in there, they're in there. That's exactly who goes into the casinos that we're going to have in Ontario. These aren't the big shots who go to Las Vegas and have \$15,000 to spend and to see Frank Sinatra or whoever else they see, a major boxing match in one of these big hotels that they have down in Las Vegas. It's people who don't have very much money. It's the most vulnerable people, the most desperate people. These are not often the people who have an education which will allow them to get a good job, to get ahead in life. These are the people



who are not well connected to the influential people, to the powerful people in our society, so they're unable to obtain good employment positions that way. What you have are desperate people that you're preying on, that any government is preying on when it brings in new forms of gambling and escalates gambling.

Some members have said, "Well, other provinces have it." Then I condemn the other provinces, regardless of which government is in power, as much as I condemn this government for embarking on this particular course of action. I don't care if they're Liberal governments or NDP or Social Credit or PQ or Conservative, whatever they happen to be, anywhere across the country.

I remember when we were discussing the matter of casinos before, the former member for Victoria-Haliburton, himself a man of the cloth, an Anglican priest, led a crusade in this Legislature against casino gambling.

**Mrs Marland:** Dennis Drainville.

**Mr Bradley:** Dennis Drainville was his name. One of the people he brought here, who I thought was rather interesting, I think was the chair of the Progressive Conservative caucus in Nova Scotia. I could be wrong, but I think the Conservative Party was in power at the time, and here was a person who was condemning what was happening in his own province under his own government, because he could see what was happening. And what was he talking about? Video lottery terminals. It wasn't even casinos he was talking about. He said, "The problem with casinos is they're a step towards video lottery terminals."

**Hon Mr Runciman:** They still have them, Jim.

**Mr Bradley:** They still have them under a subsequent Liberal government. They have them in New Brunswick under a Liberal government.

I think the point I've made is that this is a matter of principle to me. I don't care what the politics happen to be of the government bringing it in, I think it's unwise and I think it's detrimental to our society as a whole if any government brings it in or any politician happens to advocate it.

2250

When we get to these slot machines, the reason they're an escalation is that they're so widespread. Access is a big part of addiction. The more you have available — they're in the corner bar in someone's neighbourhood. We're not in the old days of the governments of many, many years ago where the number of licences was restricted to a very few neighbourhoods and there weren't that many drinking establishments. These will be all over the province. They'll be in restaurants; they'll be in bars.

I know the minister will say: "They're easily controlled. We'll watch out that young people don't play them. We'll try to make sure that people who are intoxicated don't play them." We all know, with the number of inspectors they're going to have — and this government keeps diminishing the number of inspectors in all fields — that simply won't be the case. They simply won't be able to be policed appropriately. Even with the best of intentions, which I'm sure the government would have in that regard, they won't possibly be able to do it.

What you're introducing as a government — video lottery terminals or electronic slot machines — is the

most insidious, the most seductive, the most addictive form of gambling. I have several quotes that I'll use perhaps later on if I have time from people far more expert than I in the field of addictive gambling who talk about how insidious these machines are. You've heard them referred to as the crack cocaine of gambling. People wonder why they use that terminology. The reason they use it is, I'm told, that crack cocaine is supposed to provide — what do you call it? — an instant hit or instant gratification.

**Mr Douglas B. Ford (Etobicoke-Humber):** A high.

**Mr Bradley:** An instant high, as the member mentions. The people who are expert in these fields say the same thing is felt in terms of gamblers with that instant result they can get from a video lottery terminal. That's most unfortunate, because that means it is the most addictive, the most seductive and the most insidious form of gambling.

**Mr Ford:** Turn back the clock.

**Mr Bradley:** No, I can't turn back the clock.

We have a casino in Windsor. A lot of the people in Windsor are happy with the revenues that come in; the government is happy. We have a casino in Niagara Falls. Certainly I didn't ask for it. When the government used to say to me — then the NDP government — "If we were going to put one in St Catharines, you'd be happy," I'd say: "No, you can keep your casino. I don't want one in St Catharines. I don't want all the problems that go with casinos." But we have casinos now, and at least I guess if you're comparing them, they're one place that's well policed and well controlled compared to the video lottery terminals that will be across this province, so widespread.

It's the absolutely worst kind of gambling we can possibly have that you are introducing. There are people who as a result — and these are not common results, but they are results — will lose their homes over this. There will be family breakups as a result of the gambling activity when the person who is the breadwinner comes home with no money or has squandered the paycheque that week. You may even see some family violence as the arguments start over this.

You're going to see people who are going to be embezzling from the companies for which they work, from the employer for whom they work, always believing they're going to pay the money back. These aren't crooks who are thinking well ahead of time, "How can I embezzle money and keep it?" They're people who use the money because they're desperate, they're addicted and they always believe they're going to be able to pay that back. Unfortunately, it seldom happens that way.

You're going to see more muggings. You're going to see more theft taking place as a result of this. It may not be a huge escalation, but you're going to see more as a result of the introduction of video lottery terminals.

Why is this coming about? Why is the government introducing it when Mr Eves, our Minister of Finance, the member for Parry Sound, and Mr Harris, the Premier of this province and the member for Nipissing, were so adamantly opposed in the past? I feel that particularly Mr Eves is probably personally opposed to this. Why is the government introducing it? You're introducing it because



of your revenue shortfall. Why are you having a revenue shortfall? Because you've decided to embark upon a 30% cut in income taxes in the province. That money has to be made up somehow. Even the people who agree with you on the 30% tax cut, even the people who say it's nice to have a tax cut, even the Reform Party for that matter said in its platform: "We will give you a tax cut once the budget is balanced. We don't think we should borrow more money for the purpose of giving a tax cut. It's more responsible." Your conservative economists across this country say the same thing. I'll bet if you talked — "bet" is not a word to use, is it, in this debate.

**Mr Ford:** You couldn't resist it.

**Mr Bradley:** I couldn't resist it.

I would guess that if you were to talk to John Crispo, who certainly is no foe of this government or any Conservative government, and ask if it would be wiser to delay your tax cut until such time as you had the budget balanced, he would say yes. It would be harder to be critical of it at that time.

But keep in mind one thing: That tax cut will benefit the most wealthy people in our society most of all. Yes, a few of the people in the lower echelons of pay will get a few dollars out of it, and so you can say to them, "We've given you a tax cut," but the people who will benefit the most are the most wealthy and powerful people in our society. Who are you going to tax to make up for that loss? You're going to tax the most vulnerable and often the poorest people in our society. That's most regrettable. It's most regrettable because you are transferring the burden from those who are best able to pay to those who are least able to pay and those who are most desperate.

Where are these going to be located? I say with some regret that they're going to be placed where you're going to find the most desperate people. You will not find video lottery terminals in the Albany Club here or the St Catharines Club in St Catharines, or the York Club, or the Rideau Club in Ottawa; you're not going to find them there. You're going to find them in bars and taverns and restaurants where a lot of people who don't have high-income jobs or people who don't have jobs at all are going to be trying their luck to get ahead. That's what it's all about.

Conrad Black will not be playing these machines, but perhaps some of the people he has laid off as a result of his downsizing so he can make ever greater profits are going to be playing these electronic slot machines. That's very regrettable in our society because I think what we want to look for is a society where there is equality of opportunity, not of outcome. I cannot guarantee, nor can anyone guarantee, equality of outcome. All we can guarantee is equality of opportunity, giving people a good chance, and you take away that chance when you bring in this seductive form of gambling.

The other problem is that governments are now addicted to gambling right across the country, right across North America, regardless of what they happen to be in terms of their political stripe.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Bradley:** I can tell the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale, who interjects, that these matters used to come

before various cabinets. Whenever it was even suggested that there might be a casino introduced into this province, I was adamantly opposed at the cabinet table to any thought that it might be the case. Not that there were people who were seriously putting that idea forth, but there are always people who are proposing to government that it be the case; as I say, the restaurant association and the hotel association.

What this achieves as well — it's a side benefit to you in government — is that you're going to get more people at your fund-raisers. I'm sure the hotel association and the restaurant association and the people who will run these various casinos around the province will be standing in line to buy tickets for your fund-raisers. That will help out your party, but at what cost to our society are you prepared to fill your own coffers as a party and the coffers of this government?

Surely if projects and programs are justifiable, normal forms of taxation should be utilized. If they're not justifiable, you shouldn't be getting easy money to pay for these. Mike Harris once said that. I'll find the quote a little later on, but I thought he made a good point. He was talking about the revenue from the casino in Windsor. He said that governments shouldn't be making expenditures based on money that they obtained easily because then governments would get involved in more projects and programs than they should. He made a good point on that occasion.

You are competing with some of the local charities, the local organizations that have run small gaming operations over the years, people who will get out and hustle, make some dollars for a sports organization or some other charitable organization, and that is most unfortunate.

**2300**

You will lose millions of dollars in this province to addiction. You'll have to pay, as I call it, conscience money in many cases to those who are fighting this addiction. I heard it said, and it was somewhat of a self-complimentary remark in the House, "Isn't it nice our government" — the new Progressive Conservative government — "is going to give far more to addiction research and dealing with problems of gambling addiction than any other government?" I submit to you that's because you will need that kind of money because you are expanding to the most insidious form of gambling we have. You will gain revenue, billions of dollars, but at what cost to our society?

I've come across some interesting articles that have been written on this subject in various places, mostly in those provinces that already have video lottery terminals.

The Calgary Herald; this was written on February 1, 1995, by Linda Goyette. It actually says on here that it's originally from the Edmonton Journal. She writes as follows:

"The VLT is the vicious losers' tax. We win a little, we lose too much.

"Let's look at the winners first. It's more fun to think about money that grows on machines than about steady, gloomy taxation.

"The little winner is the sucker who scoops up enough cash from a video display terminal to convince him to pump in twice as many coins. He's a happy guy while



the machine bleeps, but he loses his prize faster than he breathes. I don't argue with his inalienable right to empty his own pockets.

"The big winner is the provincial government. It will vacuum \$340 million from those taverns this year with no complaint from sheepish VLT taxpayers or the smug citizens who don't gamble themselves, but are quite willing to live off the avails. Gambling revenue is pumped into public services. It helps balance the budget.

"I will grant you that blood money comes in handy, but it can also cost too much. Albertans are paying through the nose for that \$340 million in ways they rarely imagine.

"We can begin with the men and women who can't fight a new addiction. A 34-year-old Edmonton woman, with no criminal record, went to jail this month for defrauding her employer of \$13,000 to pay for her VLT passion. She had been a bingo lover for years but needed much more money to buy the crack cocaine high of a VLT fix.

"You can blame her for her addiction. You can justify buying a new community hockey rink with her borrowed money, or her stolen money, with the common rationalization: It's a tax on the stupid. Nobody forced her to pour money into that machine.

"True enough. What do you say about her spouse and, particularly, her children? Can we justify taking their rent money or their grocery budget because we want to build a new arena or balance the provincial budget? I don't think so....

"The point is that the VLT is not the equal of a bingo card or a race form. It makes other forms of gambling look like a cake raffle at a pioneer church picnic....

"When Albertans pump \$1 billion into VLTs in 18 months, small businesses forfeit a fortune. VLT money buys hopes and dreams — vapour — not tangible merchandise and services. It does bring extra customers into bars and taverns, admittedly, but it employs fewer people and creates smaller profits than it would if deposited in other cash registers....

"Nova Scotia, a much poorer province, found the courage to pull the plug on most VLTs for the wellbeing of its citizens and its economy. Alberta can do the same. Yes, we will forfeit the revenue but we will win the grand prize: a clearer conscience, a healthier economy."

I thought it an excellent article by Linda Goyette of the Edmonton Journal.

Another one, from the Vancouver Sun, from Jeff Lee:

"Albertans have some advice for the British Columbia government, which is considering installing video lottery terminals in licensed pubs and lounges.

"Don't. Don't put them anywhere near places that serve alcohol.

"Two years after the Alberta government installed nearly 6,000 of the interactive gambling machines in taverns and pubs, the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Addiction Commission is having to treat an unexpectedly high number of new addicts to gambling.

"Most of those are well-established working people with stable lives who have never had any problems controlling themselves," said Dayle Bruce, a commission counsellor who specializes in treating gambling addicts.

"A professor who undertook a study of the prevalence of gambling addiction for the Alberta government says the best thing BC can do is not let the machines anywhere near a licensed establishment.

"Tread carefully. If you are going have them at all, have them in gambling establishments or don't have them at all," said Garry Smith, a University of Alberta professor who headed a study of gambling addiction for the Alberta government. "You're combining two or three addictions, smoking and alcohol," and VLTs, "when you put them into bars."

"The commission estimates that 5.4% of Albertans are addicted to gambling, making it one of the highest rates in North America. A study done for the commission last year estimates there are between 75,000 and 125,000 gambling addicts there.

"Bruce said the number of people coming to her clinics has skyrocketed since VLTs were introduced two years ago."

So you see an example of what's happening in the province of Alberta with their video lottery terminals.

I go on to an article written by Tom Arnold, the provincial affairs writer for the Edmonton Journal. It reads as follows:

"More than half of the gambling addicts enrolled in a new government-sponsored counselling program have opted for therapy because of their costly obsession with video slot machines.

"Just as many women as men are hooked on Alberta's billion-dollar video lottery industry. They're more likely to be unemployed with limited education, say client profile statistics from the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission.

"Of the 1,288 people enrolled in AADAC's gambling programs in 27 centres across the province in the last year...60% pointed to video terminals as a reason for seeking help....

"They're not coming in saying, 'I'm here for gambling addiction.' They're saying: 'I'm broke. I've just blown this month's rent. My wife has just discovered that I've spent all our RRSPs. My employer has just discovered that I borrowed \$1,500 out of petty cash and can't return it.'"

"According to the client profiles, about 23% of the people in this category 'have less than a grade 9 education. Another 32% didn't go further than grade 11. Another 29% started grade 12. About 16% of clients are business or technical school graduates or have a university degree."

So you can see who it really preys upon.

An interesting statistic, and my colleague the member for York South quoted this from Manitoba. There was an article in the June 10 edition of the Toronto Star. It was a Canadian Press article, with the headline saying "More Spent on Betting Than Food," and it is sad indeed to see this:

"Manitobans spend more money on gambling than on basic necessities such as bread, milk, eggs and vegetables.

"Last year Manitobans lost about \$330 million to government-run lotteries, casinos and video lottery terminals — \$300 for every man, woman and child.



"'For most people, it's just another form of entertainment,' said Addictions Foundation of Manitoba director Herb Thompson. 'The problems come when people start spending their grocery money. Then they and their families can't afford the necessities like bread and milk.'

"In Manitoba the basic grocery bill of bread, milk and vegetables totals about \$312 million, Statistics Canada data show."

So we see a rather terrible trend happening in Manitoba, which has gone in a big way for gambling.

There was an interesting article that came from the *Globe and Mail* of May 9, and it read as follows:

"Premier Mike Harris was once one of the most vocal critics of state-sponsored gambling.

"But in a major and little-debated policy shift, Mr Harris has given the nod to legalizing video lottery terminals.

"The change, announced in this week's budget, has angered groups representing gambling addicts, amusement industry operators are not amused and opposition politicians are calling Mr Harris a hypocrite.

"'There is no question that the most insidious form of gambling is the VLT,' said Alan Young, a York University law professor who represents the Coin Operators Lottery Association, a group of pinball arcade operators. The industry fears the machines will destroy their business....

"'The analysis is that VLT gambling is the crack cocaine of gambling,' said Carmela DiFlumeri, the manager of the Addiction Research Foundation's problem gambling project.

"The foundation concluded in a recent publication that 'in a world of instant gratification, nothing has captured the hearts and minds of gamblers like VLTs.'

"The VLTs look like slot machines and they allow gamblers to play poker and other games of chance electronically. The machines typically emit noises, such as bell sounds, when a player wins....

"Last year, in one of his more controversial remarks on the election campaign, Mr Harris said he didn't want the government to receive profits from its Windsor casino. He even threatened to shut down this successful tourist attraction."

"'I don't want \$1 million a day into the province of Ontario. I don't want the money. I don't want the Ontario government to have it,' Mr Harris said....

"Part of the controversy over VLTs is that they appear to be most popular among economically vulnerable and unsophisticated young gamblers.

"Ms DiFlumeri of the Addiction Research Foundation said surveys show VLTs appeal to young adults and about 10% of users will develop some type of gambling-related problems."

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In the *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, Catherine Ford writes — Catherine Ford, who you see on television from time to time, could never be accused of being a "leftie" by any chance, because I know the member for Etobicoke West would not want me to be quoting what he would consider to be lefties. She writes the following:

"In St John's, Newfoundland, the capital of Canada's poorest province, many of the bars lining George Street do a standing-room-only business, even on Sunday.

"The attractions are manifest, even if bleak in the contemplation. The bars offer raucous music, dancing and companionship. There is protection from the raw wind blowing in with the fog over St John's harbour and the ultimate attraction — an afternoon's escape from the equally raw reality of 20% unemployment and a \$290-million provincial deficit that resulted in 1,000 civil servants being newly laid off.

"Mostly, though, there is hope that a loonie or two plugged into one of the ubiquitous video lottery terminals will return a jackpot. It is that hope that keeps machines everywhere blinking in four-colour neon and eating coin after coin, quietly humming a siren song that draws the poor to their promise everywhere in Canada.

"The men and women in cities across the country — except Ontario" because this was written May 31, 1996; I don't know if you'd announced it then — who sit for hours with their backs to the lounge or the bar and their attention focused on rolling numbers or cards or cherries aren't the tuxedo-clad compatriots of James Bond. They are, as far as casual observance can tell, working-class patrons whose entertainment is beer, smokes and VLTs, all at the same time.

"They see only the payoff. What they don't see is how their loonies add up to a windfall for provincial governments across the country. If they do realize how they are seduced and taxed and made fools of, they must not care, because no matter where in Canada you go, bar gambling is endemic.

"What VLTs miss, the lotteries, casinos and bingo halls suck up. When Ontario joins the VLT craze next year, gambling profits (including casinos) are expected to hit \$2 billion a year.

"Most of that money will be taken from people who can least afford it — the poor and the unemployed, the under-employed and the desperate. Cries for the control of gambling is not so much a moral stance as a socio-economic one: why are the profits from government-sanctioned gambling not put directly back into programs to benefit the people being taxed the most?"

This is Catherine Ford who is saying this. As I say, I would call her a conservative commentator.

**Mrs Marland:** We like it better when you read.

**Mr Bradley:** There are more. There are far more. Let me quote some of the other people who are, as I say, more expert than I and most members of the House on this.

"Garry Smith, who has become the gambling specialist at the University of Alberta, describes the appeal of video slot machines: 'First of all, it's the speed at which you can play. You can complete a game cycle in about one-and-a-half seconds once you're adept at playing. And because of that you get the feeling that you're constantly in action.

"'That's what gamblers seek, this tingle of excitement when they're playing all the time. And they control the speed of the play, which you don't in most other forms of gambling, where it's the dealer or something else that controls the speed. Here you can play as fast as you can.'

"Professor Smith contrasts the immediacy of video slot machines with horse racing. Once a favourite of gambling addicts, horse racing and track betting are now sedate and



curiously old-fashioned — a race every half hour and a lot of dead time in between....

"Tibor Barsony of the Canadian Foundation on Compulsive Gambling sees North America, particularly its young people, as perfectly suited — and susceptible — to the fast, computer-driven pace of video lottery terminals.

"The VLT is 'one of the most addictive forms of gambling — addictive because it is fast, addictive because it provides instant gratification, addictive because it is paced for the modern way of thinking of younger people, of computerized gambling instead of dealing cards or throwing dice.'

"The onward march of the slot machine in Canada has had only a few significant reversals.

"Three years ago, the Nova Scotia government, alarmed by what it had created, abruptly removed 2,500 slot machines that had been installed in such places as corner stores. Another 2,800 VLTs remain, but they are restricted to licensed premises.

"Alberta originally approved plans for 8,600 video slots, but four months ago, it capped the number of machines at 6,000 after a sharp rise in public uneasiness about the spread of video gambling and a rise in gambling addiction."

"Wayne Yorke, a Nova Scotia psychologist in the field of gambling addiction, shares [many feelings of] uneasiness. He knows from his own research that most problem gamblers started down that road in childhood. He knows also that video gambling has the strongest attraction for potential young addicts and he believes this should sound a cautionary note for those who make public policy.

"Considering the fact that problems related to gambling activities among adolescents in Canada is in the range of 8% to 10%, it seems wrong to consider expanding gambling activities without taking into consideration who the future casualties will be."

Back to Garry Smith from the University of Alberta. "Garry Smith points to the experience of Alberta, where there has been a sharp increase in problem gambling. He would not legalize video slots because they are, he says, 'the most dangerous form of gambling out there.'

"After the turmoil of video gambling in Nova Scotia, Wayne Yorke is equally blunt. In an article last year in the Nova Scotia Psychologist, he warned that electronic gambling may be a calamity for the next generation.

"The video lottery terminals that are being played all over the country are, he says, 'an entrapment in an illusionary world of almost virtual reality wherein everything is a game and every game may be won or lost. The game and the play have a price. Are we willing to pay the price?'"

**Mrs Marland:** We've waited all night to hear you speak and all you do is read rhetoric.

**Mr Bradley:** I have many more of these. The member says "rhetoric." She wouldn't be able to define rhetoric. What I'm talking about here are various opinions offered by people who have done studies, something this government doesn't want to see. I'm convinced that if this government had looked at the studies and assessed them carefully and looked at them objectively, this government would not now be embarking upon video lottery terminals.

**Hon Marilyn Mushinski (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation):** What happens to freedom of choice?

**Mr Bradley:** The member from Scarborough interjects. If she were sitting somewhere else in the House she of course would be agreeing with this statement that I'm making now. But you have to defend the government policy. I understand you have to defend the government policy and that's your business. You're a member of the cabinet and you cannot be diverse in your opinion from the cabinet publicly. I understand that. I respect that is part of our cabinet system. I respect the fact that there is cabinet solidarity and secrecy but I don't agree with the member and her interjections.

We have a situation in Ontario where we have the Premier of this province and the finance minister of this province, both sworn opponents of video lottery terminals in years gone by — and in fact of casino gambling — we have both of them now responsible for introducing this into Ontario. We have a situation where those who have espoused family values in the past have warned us of the dangers of gambling and other, what they would call immoral, activities, are now silent in the government benches because they either want into the cabinet or they're afraid to offend somebody. I invite those people to step forward tonight, to put into action what appears in those pamphlets, to be consistent with their policies that they have espoused over the years because if they were, I would respect them, and I suspect so would their fellow members of the House. The people in the Premier's office do not respect dissent so they would not want that but others might well respect that.

What you're introducing in Ontario is an escalation of gambling. We've gone from something that was relatively benign in the beginning and we keep escalating, to casinos — as the members have appropriately pointed out on the other side — the NDP, who may or may not speak against this bill, introduced casinos in this province. I was opposed to that but I've accepted that they're there. I've accepted that Premier Harris has said in Niagara Falls, "There shall be a casino." I wish there were not, but there is. And that is the way it is. There's one going to open in the Speaker's riding of Simcoe East and that is going to happen, and I accept that as a decision. I again wish it were not so, but it is there.

2320

But you have an opportunity now to resist the absolute worst form of gambling, the most addictive, the most seductive form of gambling in this province.

**Hon Ms Mushinski:** How can you be against economic development?

**Mr Bradley:** While you yap over there, while you sit in your seat and yap, there are going to be thousands of people in this province who are going to go broke because of what your government's doing. Why don't you think for a change instead of just yapping over there? Why don't you think of what you're doing to people in this province? Because you're going to destroy their lives. That's what you're going to do, bringing these into every bar and tavern. What do you think's going to happen? Who do you think's going to be playing these? Not your rich friends. They're going to be poor people.



They're going to be desperate people. They're going to be vulnerable people. That's who's going to play these. And that'll be on your conscience when you bring that into this province. And don't you forget that's what you've done. All of you people who are concerned, all of you people on the government benches who are so moralistic when it comes to certain issues had better check your own morals on this.

I want to hear from those who are in church on Sunday talking about their moral values, who today in this House don't have the guts to stand up against the most insidious, seductive form of gambling that this province has ever introduced. If you had any guts, you'd get up and stop it. But you won't. You allow the advisers to the Premier who need all these revenues because they're giving their tax break to the rich to get away with this, and you shouldn't. You should resist this. Every one of you on the government benches should resist what's happening, but you don't. You just sit there and accept it. You just parrot what the Premier's advisers tell the Premier and tell the rest of you. Show some gumption over there. Show some independence. Show something that we haven't seen in a long time. I would look forward to seeing that. I would respect those people who are prepared to do that. But when I hear you sit over there and yap from the sidelines about such an important issue as this —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** The member for Etobicoke-Humber.

**Mr Bradley:** You don't have the guts to stand up against it. If you had that you would be fighting against this, because that's exactly what's going to happen in this province. You know better. That's the problem. You people know better than to introduce this in this province.

Once you've got it, it's hard to take it away. You can't close the casinos now. You can't take away lotteries now. You can't take away offtrack betting. Once you've got this, I'm telling you, you'll never get rid of it. That's why it's important to stop it in its tracks today while you have the chance, because if you don't you're going to leave very vulnerable people in a desperate situation in this province. I lament for those people who are in that position. I really lament for those people.

You can say you're going to get \$2 billion in your gambling revenues, but I ask you in your conscience, ask you to ask yourself, at what price are you prepared to get that \$2 billion, at what price to our society are you prepared to take money out of the pockets of the most desperate, the most vulnerable and the addicted people of this province?

**The Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr Flaherty:** I listened with interest to the sometimes emotional speech of the member for St Catharines, and if one were to take what he has said here at face value one would think that this was extremely permissive legislation, this bill that is at second reading now.

The member fails to mention the provisions that are in the legislation, the very important control provision with respect to VLTs, and that is in subsection 3(6) of the act which is the section that provides that a licence may be suspended, and that is the licence to sell liquor, not the

licence to have a VLT machine, but the licence to sell liquor, where an employee or a holder of a licence has contravened or been convicted of contravening the new section of the Ontario Lottery Corporation Act dealing with persons in that area of the premises where the VLTs are located, or permitting someone under the age of 19 having any access to the gaming premises. It's a very serious control mechanism that is part of this legislation.

The member for St Catharines also fails to mention another important part of the act and that is the "salting the earth" provision, which is to protect neighbourhoods from licensee after licensee misusing licences, creating disturbances in neighbourhoods. That's going to be corrected by the act, which will provide a revocation provision for up to two years where in the public interest it has been determined that a particular premise has been misused time after time by licensees. These two important control mechanisms, one with respect to licensed premises, the other with respect to VLTs, but both arising out of the circumstances of this legislation, were not mentioned by my friend in his speech.

**Mr Colle:** I'd like to commend the member for St Catharines for his comments because, as we all know, they were really heartfelt. He does believe that these video lottery terminals are going to be harmful to a lot of vulnerable people. Members on the other side don't want to accept that, but he truly believes that and feels strongly that he should warn you on the other side that this is what you're embarking on.

This is the most widespread introduction of gambling of any kind we'll see in this province. You're almost doubling the number of gambling opportunities. It's not just casinos; these are neighbourhood gambling machines that are insidious. They are addictive. Everywhere they've been installed, they've been proven to be addictive. Who are the ones who will be addicted? The member for St Catharines has told you, and it's clear from all the research: It's the poor, the weak, the unemployed, the ones who are addicted to gambling. They will become victimized by this very simple tax grab. It's a money grab by this government. It takes money out of the weakest and the poorest and most vulnerable and puts it into the government coffers to pay for an ill-advised tax cut that benefits those who are most able to meet the needs of society. The vulnerable will definitely be attacked by these video lottery terminals.

It's not only going to be the players. The thing that is most horrendous is that the innocent women and children and other people who aren't playing are going to be victimized by the machines because that player will use up grocery money and rent money. That's who is going to be hurt. People who are not even playing the machines will also be hurt by the use of these insidious machines.

**Mrs Marland:** It is interesting to listen to members of the Liberal Party, the official opposition, because they were the party, when they were the government, that expanded lotteries in this province. You can't change your position on this kind of issue. If we are going to stand in this place and be morally, passionately opposed to gambling, I respectfully suggest it should be to all forms. You can't pick and choose and say, "This kind is worse than this," and, "This is more addictive than that."



You only have to see people lining up for lottery tickets at any of the malls and the corner convenience stores. You're absolutely right; when lotteries were expanded by the Liberal government, we knew, through all the recorded statistics, that it is the people who can least afford them who buy the most lottery tickets. What we're talking about in this legislation is just an extension of what was started by the Liberal government between 1985 and 1990.

The difference, however, is that we recognize the addiction factor and we are allocating funds to help people with addiction. But whether they gamble legally or illegally, we are not going to be able to stop people gambling in this province. A lottery ticket itself is a gamble, and there are millions of dollars spent advertising and promoting the sale of lottery tickets. It was the Liberal government, as a matter of fact, that didn't even spend the money from the lottery corporation —

**The Speaker:** The member's time has expired.  
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**Mr Chris Stockwell (Etobicoke West):** I don't have as much compassion on the issue as the member for St Catharines with respect to gambling. I presume gambling to be a different form of tax really; it's a tax that you can opt into or opt out of. It does astound me, though, having visited the Windsor casino and just having walked through the halls of the Windsor casino seeing the people gamble — it's probably not a fair comparison, because you can't judge just by nature, but it seems to me that there are some problems with gambling, and the problems stem from the fact that it does seem, from the studies I've read, to cause the people who can least afford it to gamble.

We in this party had a position in opposition which was very vehemently opposed to the Windsor casino. When I see the member for St Catharines rising on his feet and making a rather passionate plea for us to withdraw this particular approach, it certainly reminds me of the past we all bring here.

I'm going to be curious to see what the committee hearings say, because on this one I really want to hear from the people of the province of Ontario. I think the good people of Etobicoke, if given the opportunity to vote, would probably vote against them. That's my gut feeling.

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** Give them a chance.

**Mr Stockwell:** Having said that, I would say to the member across from North York, who supported casino gambling at the CNE, it's something we have to ultimately hear through our committee process. What the people tell us at committee should go into how we frame this bill, because I think gambling and Sunday shopping and issues like that really cross the political boundaries and enter into the realm of what our societies want. I'm going to be very interested to hear what the people of this province have to say, because ultimately I answer, on moral issues such as these, to the constituents of Etobicoke, and that's who I'd like to hear from.

**The Speaker:** The member for St Catharines has up to two minutes.

**Mr Bradley:** I want to thank all members for their contribution. I thought the member for Durham Centre

made a valid point when he said that the legislation also contains some protection against those who run bad neighbourhood bars, for instance. My contention would be that this is very supportive; I just don't believe it should be in this particular bill. I think a separate bill would deal with that nicely, and I would be very supportive of what the member has said.

As for the sanction on losing the liquor licence, the problem is that even if you wanted to, even with the best of intentions, which I'm sure the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations has, it's going to be very difficult to police young people and intoxicated people from dealing with these machines. It's just a very difficult thing to do.

To the member for Mississauga South, you can look at various forms of gambling. I'm not a great fan of any of them, I must say, but I think it's a matter of escalation. This is a considerable escalation, and this is allowing far more opportunities, and this is the most insidious form. That would be my contention with this form of gambling, why I'm so strongly opposed to it.

The member for Oakwood detected that my main concern with this legislation is with video lottery terminals.

I thought the member for Etobicoke West made an excellent point, as he so often does in this House. First of all, the committee hearings — he's quite correct — are going to be useful. This is one bill where I think the committee hearings are going to be useful, and I hope the government genuinely listens to them, because you'll have proponents and opponents.

I also agree with him that in many areas people would vote against if they could vote on these. I commended Oshawa in this House the other day. They turned down casino gambling. It's very attractive to people. Municipal people always seem to really like casino gambling. I stood in this House and commended Oshawa for taking that step, because it's not an easy step to take. But I, like the member for Etobicoke West, really hope that the government will listen to the representations made. Maybe we will all learn more about this form of gambling and come to different conclusions.

**The Speaker:** Further debate? The member for Oakwood.

**Mr Colle:** What we're really getting into is what you would maybe call the digital gambling economy. In the Caribbean now they're setting up a form of digital gambling through the Internet. What you can do is lie in bed or on your couch at home in your pajamas, hook up to the Internet and gamble. Probably next year or the year after we'll see this government also introduce that. The way that will work is that gamblers can set up a credit card account directly with the Internet casinos. They can work through one of the money transfer agencies already on the Internet. Eventually, wagers could be taken directly from a gambler's bank account through a home debit card machine. Personal security codes like those used with automated teller cards would prevent the account from being abused. That's what we're coming to; there are going to be all kinds of high-tech solutions to how the government can get more gambling revenues. Really this is what this is all about.



As the member for St Catharines has said, the difficulty with this form of gambling is that it's not normal-type gambling; it's part of this new video attraction. If you talk to a lot of parents, you'll see they can't get their children away from video games. Whether they be at home or at the corner store, they're glued to these video games. Those same young people are going to grow up and they're going to be addicted to VLTs. VLTs are quite unique and different because they have a highly addictive quality to them. I don't know what the mechanism is that does this but it does have that magnetic, addictive quality to it above and beyond almost any other form of gambling.

I've talked to a number of people about this and they've said, amazingly enough, that the people who get most addicted to VLTs are the stupid gamblers, the amateurs, the ones who couldn't win at any kind of gambling that takes skill. They would be the ones using the VLTs rather than people who actually know something about gambling. You're going to see people who are extremely vulnerable and extremely stupid stuck on these machines and losing not just hundreds, but probably thousands of dollars.

One report mentions that people who get addicted will not come for help until they lose probably \$30,000. When they lose \$30,000 they go for some kind of help for their addiction. For a lot of people in this economy, \$30,000 is a heck of a lot of money. That's what the average person will probably lose on these machines to start with.

The other thing that concerns me about these machines is that you may have gambling in casinos and you have to make a special trip to get there and it's not in the local neighbourhoods, but these machines will proliferate in local neighbourhoods. In the area of the city where I live we already have a lot of problems with licensed establishments and unlicensed establishments like booze cans. When you add these machines, which are going to cause people to lose money rapidly, it will no doubt add to petty crime, theft and break-ins in those neighbourhoods. People will be so fixed on using these machines that they will go out and engage in more crime to try and feed this habit.

It's no different from coke addicts and drug addicts who are around a lot of neighbourhoods in poor areas of the city. When they run out of dope and don't have any money of their own — they've spent it — they go out and steal to buy dope. They'll do the same thing to feed the video lottery terminals. One concern I have is, how much more policing will we need as a result of having video lottery terminals? How much more enforcement will be required to ensure that there isn't an increase in break-ins and shoplifting in neighbourhoods as a result of these insidious machines on almost every corner in this province?

I think part of the legislation should read that 100 of these machines should be in the Albany Club. That is one amendment I hope we move and should be a proviso: that you put 100 in the Albany Club. We won't see these machines in Forest Hill, we won't see them on the Kingsway, we won't see them in Rosedale, but we'll see them in the poor, more vulnerable neighbourhoods and that's where people will be hurt the most. That's where we'll see slot machines.

We know there's a growing number of bankruptcies in this province. These machines will no doubt add to that because people right now are strapped in terms of their personal household debt, the private loans they have outstanding. This will increase the number of personal bankruptcies; it will increase the hardship in families that right now can't meet their payments. If you happen to be so unlucky as to have a person addicted to gambling in your household, you can imagine the damage these machines will do to that person and the damage those machines and that addiction will do to the household.

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Just imagine the picture. It's almost a three-for-one deal. The government will put these machines in so you can do three things for the price of one: You can smoke, and the government collects taxes on the cigarettes; you can drink, and the government can collect taxes on the drinks; and then you've got the VLT, so there's smoking, gambling and drinking at the corner restaurant or bar. That's what the picture is going to be all over this province: smoking, gambling and drinking to feed government coffers, and they're certainly detrimental to many households.

We have to remember that these machines are nothing more than a cheap money grab, a cheap tax grab, that's all they are: an attempt by the government of Ontario to pay for its tax cut. No doubt there'll be hundreds of millions of dollars raised as a result of this, but these dollars will come from whom? The unemployed, the poor, the vulnerable and the weak. This government is going to grab probably \$1 billion a year from these people to feed the tax cut hunger. It's another tax on the poor and the most vulnerable.

I think the people of Ontario should be very concerned about this bill and why it should be opposed. It's not about morality, it's not about one's religious beliefs; it's about watching out for those in society who are most vulnerable to this type of insidious tax grab through a machine. It's a precursor to a lot more electronic tax-grabbing that we're going to see, and I think it doesn't help anybody but the government in terms of paying for its tax cut and attacks and punishes the weakest among us.

It says in the Edmonton Journal on June 9: "A 68-year-old addict had 'liquidated his automobile, and all his furniture. He was down to his chesterfield. He called me before Christmas, really upset.'" "A man three months behind in his rent, being threatened with eviction, who'd gambled away his pension cheque, and was now going to the food bank." These are the types of people who will be hurt.

Another article from the Calgary Herald says: "I've seen people blow everything in the three machines we have here. They are here when we open in the morning and when we close at night. I've seen people blow their rent, everything. It is addicting."

Right across this country it's very clear that these machines are an attack on those who are weak and vulnerable, an attack on people who can't defend themselves against these addictions. We have to ask this government whether it realizes the impact on vulnerable people, the impact on neighbourhoods: As you put slot



machines in corner restaurants and bars, what is going to happen to increases in crime, shoplifting and theft in every neighbourhood in this province because people will be so desperate as a result of this addiction? Stop, think and ask the people in Ontario whether they want slot machines in their corner restaurants and bars.

**The Speaker:** Time for questions and comments. Further debate? The member for Yorkview.

**Mr Sergio:** I'm not particularly delighted to speak on this item at this hour, not because of the hour as much as I have problems in finding something positive with respect to this legislation.

But before the hour runs out I would like to pass my congratulations on to the member for Ottawa East, who I believe was celebrating his 49th birthday today. I hope he's celebrating somewhere, perhaps at home; I wanted to do that before the day was over.

On the so-called VLTs or video lottery terminals —

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** Slot machines.

**Mr Sergio:** I would really call them slot machines, or "slaughter machines" I think would be an appropriate term — I have to agree with the member from, I believe it is, the Rainy River area. He said the title of the bill is quite misleading. I wonder honestly, and I would ask the members on the government side as well, if the members, instead of saying what it says, were to say that we are planning to introduce slot machines at every licensed place in Ontario and eventually in every variety store, flower shop, coffee shop — they will come — I wonder what the people of Ontario would say.

We are not really presenting it the way it is to the people of Ontario, because if we were to tell the people of Ontario what we are planning to do with the passing of this legislation, I am sure we would see quite a different atmosphere and an answer from the people out there. I think the people would rise in concern as to the effect this would be doing to their immediate neighbourhoods.

If we are saying that this would help charitable organizations, non-profit organizations, this is what one of the organizations says. It's from the charitable gaming industry. They call it call it "Ravage or Reward?" and it says: "There is a staggering lack of information available to guide the examination of VLTs. Considering that VLTs could have a massive impact to the province, we suggest these are hardly the circumstances in which our government should make such an important decision." It goes on to say that this is not the appropriate time, without proper consultation, to move ahead with the installation of some 20,000 or 30,000 VLTs in Ontario.

There is a letter here from one of those concerned organizations which do support a variety of needy people in our province. This is a copy of the letter sent to the Premier from the Royal Canadian Air Force Association, and they say, "If you license these particular machines, this would virtually put our organization out of business." The letter ends by saying: "I urge you, Mr Premier, to please not put groups such as mine out of business. We are a valuable asset to your province and local communities. Groups such as ourselves, particularly in these difficult times, are helping to pick up the shortfall created by the funding cutbacks. We agree with you that it is

necessary to get the province back on its feet. However, if VLTs are installed, we will no longer be able to help achieve our and your objective."

My question is very simple: Why this particular legislation? Certainly this was not one of the promises that the Premier was spouting during the election of last year.

**Mr Michael Brown:** Exactly the opposite.

**Mr Sergio:** It is indeed exactly the opposite. It is one of those things that he was not committed to, that he didn't have to do. He did not promise it. It was not part of the Common Sense Revolution. Therefore, the Premier and the minister who is responsible for the introduction of this legislation have absolutely no good reason to introduce this type of gambling in Ontario at this particular time.

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In May 1995, these are the words of the Premier during the heat of a campaign, in the hope that perhaps whatever he was saying would win him some votes, and it's most unfortunate that indeed what he said, he won an election. The problem is what's happening after the election.

Just to say that in May 1995, in the words of the Premier: "I don't want the money. Part of the problem is the Ontario government has too much money. They want too much money. They borrow too much money. They spend too much money." That was on May 3, 1995. On May 16, 1995, this is what he said: "A Harris government will not move on VLTs until all sectors have been consulted, all impacts are assessed and an agreement is reached on the distribution of revenues." This was the now-Premier prior to the election. That was on May 16, 1995.

As late as May 7 this year, in the presentation of their budget, this is what they proposed: "...the Ontario Lottery Corp will develop a plan to introduce a limited number" — some 20,000 or 30,000 — "of video lottery terminals" in Ontario.

What has changed? Why do they wish to introduce another form of gambling, more destructive, more addictive than going to a particular casino? You've got to either fly, you've got to jump in your car or you've got to take the GO train and make perhaps an evening or a day or a weekend and go to a particular casino. But what we are seeing now is that the government, the Premier, wants to introduce mini-casinos to every corner store in our province, in our cities. So why now? Why now does the Premier want to introduce this type of gambling?

As the Premier said, we have had no consultation, and he did say that he would give us full consultation. He did say that every sector would be consulted, but we have had no consultation. He said that we would have an impact assessment, and we don't have an impact assessment. What is the reason? What is the reason the Premier is pushing so hard to introduce mini-lotteries all over the place, at every corner store in our province? Is it because there is a demand?

We have heard from some of the members, especially from the member for Mississauga South, that if he were to put the question to his constituents, they probably would say no.



**Mr Colle:** Etobicoke West.

**Mr Sergio:** Etobicoke West. Thank you.

It was the Premier himself who said: "I'm allergic to casinos and I'm not so sure that I want to keep even the one in Windsor. Therefore, I think before we do approve any other casino, we should have a referendum. We should go to the people. We should consult the people." What has happened? It's only a short year. Therefore there is absolutely no reason, because the people of Ontario did not have a chance. They didn't have the possibility of expressing themselves on this particular new gambling that we are proposing to bring in their own immediate communities. So there is no demand.

Is it because there is something good for the people of Ontario that the government wants to push this particular legislation so fast at this particular time? The answer is absolutely no. There is no benefit to the people of Ontario. There is no profit for the people of Ontario. There are absolutely no positive things that the Premier could bring to a particular neighbourhood, to a particular community, with the introduction of these so-called VLTs or slot machines.

Could it be that this would create jobs perhaps in Ontario, the much-touted 725,000 jobs? Absolutely not. As a matter of fact, what we are getting from all sides is that they will eliminate jobs. They will not create jobs.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Sergio:** I hear somebody saying on the other side, "True," they will eliminate jobs. I'm quite pleased to see that they agree with that.

So if they don't create jobs, if they don't bring any positive solutions to any particular community, could it be then that the introduction of slot machines, or VLTs as they are called, would help reduce crime in our society, in our communities, in our province? Absolutely not. I think we would see crime jump sky-high.

Going back for a second, if the Premier said, "We will give you consultation, we will have an assessment impact," I think he owes it to the people of Ontario to have exactly that, to have the consultation, to have the views of the people of Ontario, to have an assessment done as to the impact that these machines will have on the social fabric of the people of Ontario.

I would think that if the Premier were to go to the people and he would get one idea one way or another, I think he could be convinced to say, "Yes, it is something good that we should go ahead with or something that we should not consider." I think he owes that to the people of Ontario.

Something very important: When it comes to passing the buck to another level of government, it's very easy to say: "This is what we're going to do and you're going to do it; you're going to streamline your budget; you're

going to be making cuts. It's up to you where you're going to do it." I don't think that even the local municipalities have been notified of this particular legislation and I can assure you, Mr Speaker, that if we were to propose a couple of rounds of negotiations throughout Ontario, or even within Metro, with the local Metro municipalities, you would get a resounding no with respect to the installation of VLTs or slot machines anywhere in Metro, in the GTA, in the province of Ontario. I think that municipalities should have the opportunity to say, "Yes, we want them," or "No, we don't want them in our municipalities."

I think the least that the government should do is give the opportunity to the local municipality to say, "Yes, if you want them, you can have them. If you don't want them, you don't have to have them." It's very easy to pass the buck to a lower level of government when they don't have the power to say, "If we don't want them, we aren't going to get it," because it's practically being imposed.

**Interjection:** Forced.

**Mr Sergio:** It's forced upon the local municipalities. But really, I would urge the members on the government side to consider the effect that this will have in their own local municipalities.

**Mr Stockwell:** Come on, Mario. Gambling at the CNE, you were fully in favour of that.

**Mr Sergio:** Let me answer the member for Etobicoke West. I do enjoy myself going once in a while and spending a couple of hours at one of the casinos. So I have no problem. As a member coming from a local council, I did support casinos, but what you're proposing here, what the government is proposing here, is totally different.

Why don't you tell the people the way it is, my friend across the floor? Why don't you tell the people the way it is, that this is another form of gambling that you're willing to introduce in every corner store, where you're going to have the young, little 14-year-old going to buy a jug of milk and he's being tempted to put the money in one of these machines? Why don't you tell the truth, the member for Etobicoke West? I wonder what he's going to tell his constituents, the single parents, when they have no other alternative but to send —

**Mr Stockwell:** It's 12 o'clock; take him out of his misery.

**Mr Sergio:** Mr Speaker, I have 15 minutes.

**The Speaker:** It being almost 12 of the clock, this House stands —

**Mr Sergio:** Can I continue tomorrow, Mr Speaker?

**The Speaker:** Yes. This House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow afternoon.

*The House adjourned at 2400.*



## ERRATA

No.	Page	Column	Line(s)	Should read:
93A	3846	2	46	behalf of the member for Don Mills, to the Parliament of Ontario

No.	Page	Column	A corrected version of a petition follows:
93A	3846	1	

## CHILD ABUSE

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** I have a petition signed by over 700 people within the Metro area and endorsed by Anna-Marie Goralczyk, who is here today in the gallery to hear me read this petition. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it asks people to sign the petition on child abuse and the CAS. It says:

"Family courts should hear applications of 'Child in Need of Protection from the CAS.' CASs should report to police all abuses in foster care. The public should be informed to report child abuse to the police, who would be assisted by CAS in appropriate situations. CASs should be safe homes, answerable to the police and not investigating crime, avoiding abuse handling internally.

"Parents shouldn't be denied equal evaluation of evidence or forced to communicate with CAS in ways that remove that equality, in case the CAS's mandate and protocols shift from the best interests of the child to themselves due to abuses in care.

"The police should react when CASs obstruct justice, tamper with evidence, use coercion and be in control of the registrar of abuse. A safe home should be organized for children who've been abused in care, access and therapy prohibited to CAS. When short of police, enlargements should be made to youth bureaus instead of handing the investigations to CASs, to avoid CASs investigating themselves.

"Official guardians (government child lawyers) should present evidence from the child only and not rely on submissions of the CAS. Children should be free to choose an attorney, and not forced counsel by official guardians against his/her will.

"It should be illegal for CAS to threaten permanent separation because a parent doesn't want to sign for extended care when a period of two years results in the parent losing custody, regardless of the facts.... A group able to act should oversee that CASs don't put parents in humanly/legally impossible positions.

"CASs shouldn't force instruction on child therapists. Family court judges shouldn't rely on therapy reports as mini-judgements and should consider evidence of persons other than the CAS network.

"The police should recognize webs of victims in organizations that may tend to protect their own. A recent decision by the Supreme Court of Canada has favoured freedom of the press. General media and publication of names of dangerous persons should be practised, including CAS employees.

"CASs should report statistics of abuse in foster care and percentages of charges/convictions.

"The CAS should give clear, justifiable reasons in writing to parents for enforcing permanent family separation, silence/inaction not being an option.

"CASs should assist families who suffer aftermath of sexual abuse, regardless if charges are laid."

Thank you, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity.



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First Session, 36th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Tuesday 25 June 1996

Mardi 25 juin 1996



Speaker  
Honourable Allan K. McLean

Président  
L'honorable Allan K. McLean

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 25 June 1996

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 25 juin 1996

*The House met at 1333.  
Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### TAX REFORM

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** The city of North York, of which my riding is part, has endured a crisis. In the past 18 months, 18 major businesses have fled North York, at a cost of millions of dollars in lost property tax revenues. What is worse is that many other businesses are packing it up just as quickly.

Unfortunately, as businesses shut their doors, jobs are lost, and in many instances, these jobs and businesses not only leave North York; in ever-increasing numbers they leave the province as well. But North York is only a symptom of the problem. In Metro, 27 major businesses have shut their doors, costing the city tens of millions of dollars in lost property tax revenue and thousands of jobs.

We don't need another study to tell the business community and the people of Metro Toronto what they already know. The people and business community of Metro deserve action on tax reform.

A while back we were promised that we would see legislation in April. We didn't. Now, almost three months after the fact, the minister has deferred legislation by another six weeks.

The longer the government delays a decision, the more businesses will opt to leave Metro, costing jobs and millions of lost property tax revenues.

### FOODSERVICES STAFF

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** More victims. This Friday, 20-plus staff from downstairs in the legislative cafeteria are gone, out, victims of this so-called revolution.

Let me say to these Tory backbenchers as they line up down there with their \$78,000-plus-a-year incomes to be served by any number of those hardworking women and men down in that cafeteria and foodservices, when they look into the faces of those people, what do these Tory hacks have to say to people like Anna Aurilia, two and a half years away from retirement, 18 years of working in this assembly, thrown out on the street?

It ain't much of a revolution; it ain't very much common sense. We've got victims downstairs in this assembly today. We've got fat, blue-suited Tories smiling and twiddling their thumbs as lives are being destroyed.

Oh, the prospect of being hired by the new contract services, Marriott, at a rate of pay starting at \$7 or \$7.50 an hour. That's big. That's real big.

I tell you, Speaker, that this government has created yet another group of victims in as ruthless and cold-hearted and brutal a way as could ever be imagined. I tell you that those cooks and cashiers and waiters and waitresses downstairs have been brutally attacked by a thuggish, despicable, swinish government.

### HIGHLAND GAMES

**Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I would like to take this opportunity to invite the people of Ontario to an exciting event taking place July 1 in Oxford, the Zorra Highland Games.

This year marks the 59th annual Highland Games in Embro, and I would like to point out that this event has only increased in popularity throughout those 59 years.

This year not only thousands from my riding but many people from across southwestern Ontario, the United States, Switzerland and Scotland will take part in the numerous events featured.

One of the biggest and most exciting events is the Lafarge Canada Inc memorial tug of war. This event started in 1993 in honour of the Zorra team that captured the tug of war championship at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair.

Teams from across Ontario will compete against two teams from Switzerland and several from the United States as they stake their claims to the 1996 championship.

For those who love highland dance, there will be more than 175 dancers from across Canada, the US and Scotland kicking up their heels and joining in time with the pipe bands on hand to entertain and compete.

I would like to invite members of the public and especially my fellow MPPs to join in the fun of the stone toss, caber toss and farmers' walk, which sees participants carry 185-pound concrete blocks until they drop them. The person carrying them the farthest wins.

So on behalf of all those in Oxford, I would like to invite those who love the games to Embro on July 1.

### SPECIAL SERVICES AT HOME PROGRAM

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur):** I'd like to remind this government about a commitment made to families who participate in the special services at home program. Many of the children involved with this program are severely affected with disabling conditions and require 24-hour care in order to sit, stand, walk, eat or dress, all things many of us take for granted. Through the assistance of dedicated parents and programs such as special services at home, these children have the chance to realize their full potential.



On October 16, the Minister of Community and Social Services pledged the support of the government to this program in the House, maintaining that funding for the program had not been cut. He said, "We're protecting the funding for these programs to help parents with the cost of raising a disabled child." Now we find that this commitment is not as straightforward as it appeared.

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The truth is, more and more families are opting to keep their special-needs family members at home, in safe, nurturing environments. Funding as a result is spread further and does not support the families in the way that they need.

Families in my riding have been informed that the support that they receive under that program has been cut by at least 25%. Let me repeat that: 25%. The needs that they have to support their children at home haven't changed, yet funding has been drastically reduced.

Let me reassure you that the needs of these families do not diminish and, if anything, their needs increase as these children grow and develop. The only thing that has changed is the commitment by this government to maintain this program so that it truly supports those who need it.

#### ART PROJECT

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** Last night marked a very special occasion in my riding of Riverdale, the official dedication of *Time: and a Clock*, a public art project initiated by the Queen-Broadview Village Business Improvement Area. The event was the culmination of years of work by member merchants and residents of the area: one of Toronto's most historic neighbourhoods.

*Time and a Clock* is a three-site installation. On the Queen Street bridge over the Don River is a clock and a river of text. Embedded in the sidewalks at the intersection of Queen Street East and Broadview Avenue are four meditations on time. On Queen Street East at Empire Avenue are four pennants of time.

The Queen-Broadview area has suffered greatly through the recent recession. It's a testament to small businesses in the area that they've continued their dedication to this project.

I particularly want to thank Albert Edelstein, who has been chair of the Queen-Broadview Village BIA for about 17 years, for his continued dedication and hard work to the economic development of the area. I also want to congratulate Eldon Garnet, the artist who conceived and created this stunning piece of public art. The work perfectly weaves together a sense of the area's historic legacy and the hope that we all share for a bright, better future.

Unfortunately, because the House sat last night discussing the government's plan to gut environmental assessment in Ontario, I had to miss the event, but I heartily want to congratulate all of those involved.

#### GROWTH IN PORT COLBORNE

**Mr Tim Hudak (Niagara South):** I wanted to let the members know of some exciting developments going on

in Port Colborne, Ontario. Under the leadership of Mayor Neal Schoen, Port Colborne has shown that it belongs to the new school of government. It believes in cutting taxes, balancing budgets, reducing red tape and duplication. It believes lower taxes lead to higher growth.

Port Colborne is promoting economic growth by cutting taxes, like the provincial government is doing, for new home buyers. A creative incentive program announced by Mayor Schoen in the city will give new home buyers in Port Colborne up to a \$5,000 tax break on new homes when combined with the provincial land transfer tax rebate.

Recently, with Canol Block opening its doors once again after two years standing idle; with Niagara Shoes, an employer of 30 women and men, winning a \$1-million contract; with Raven Industries expanding its workforce significantly; and just down the road in Welland, Ontario, with Canadian Tire Acceptance increasing its workforce by 100 people; and Alliance Communications Call Centres tripling its workforce by another 100 people; with new growth and new jobs and 3,000 jobs coming to the peninsula directly with Casino Niagara and with this new program in Port Colborne, Ontario, I'll tell you, for these new jobs, the new people coming to the Niagara Peninsula, Port Colborne, Ontario, will make a very fine place to live.

#### PROVINCIAL PARKS

**Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall):** I rise today to jog the memory of the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism, as well as two other cabinet colleagues, about how they have misled the people of eastern Ontario regarding the reopening of the parks and the campgrounds in my area.

For years now, they have been talking about — unfortunately, all it has been is talk — reopening these parks to tourists and visitors through partnership and private sector enterprise. When I asked the minister last fall when he'd open the parks, he told me — I am quoting from the October 26 edition of Hansard — that he'd like to "investigate a bit further into the situation."

More recently, on April 2, 1996, when I cautioned the minister that he was ruining tourism opportunities and economic rejuvenation in eastern Ontario, he said, "when the summer is finished, it's going to have been very prosperous season for eastern Ontario."

Then there is my colleague the Minister of Agriculture and Food from Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry and East Grenville, who said over two years ago, "Potential private operators...can do a very good job" reopening the parks, and "I hope the government addresses this before the summer" of 1994.

Minister, you have been in power for over a year now, and to date, you have failed to prove that good news is coming by the end of the summer for all the private investors to create jobs for students.

#### GREAT LAKE RACE FOR CHARITY

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** Members will know that I often rise in this House to talk about the



wonderful community of Beaches-Woodbine and the incredible spirit that is there as people come together to work to raise funds to help others in our community who are less fortunate.

Today I want to inform members of another event and invite them to attend the Great Lake Race for Charity. The Great Lake Race for Charity is now in its 13th year. I had an opportunity 14 years ago to be a member of the board of directors of Community Centre 55 when we initiated this.

It takes place on Monday, July 1, Canada Day. It's a 30-mile race involving North canoes. It starts from Niagara-on-the-Lake and finishes at Ontario Place some time between 11 and noon. It's the biggest canoe race of its type in Ontario.

There are a lot of people involved in making this happen and a lot of corporations which have sponsored it over the years. This year corporations like Husky Injection Molding Systems, TECHCAN, Chrysler, the Toronto Sun, Labatt's and the Bank of Montreal are all involved.

I want to pay particular tribute this year to Robert Schad, owner of Husky, for his ongoing support but his support for a boat which is for paraplegic athletes. This is the first and only North canoe of its kind, and it's the world's first adapted sports canoe for persons with disabilities. The Adapted Sports Technological Research Association, ASTRA, along with One Step Beyond, have developed this so that people with disabilities can be fully integrated into this event.

It's an incredible event. The money that is raised by the teams of paddlers who dedicate their time and earn money for this goes to good works within my community. I hope you'll all come out and join us.

#### LABOUR PROTEST

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** I rise in the House to comment on labour's day of disruption in Peterborough yesterday. I had the opportunity to tour downtown Peterborough before the march to find that many businesses were not going to close no matter what. Many merchants indicated they were going to lose significant amounts of money, but they chose to do this out of their belief in democracy, that we all have individual rights no matter what side you're on.

As the 4,000 protesters gathered in Cray Park to hear from the out-of-town labour leaders about the negative, the rest of the city was concentrating on the positive.

I had the opportunity to welcome a Japanese delegation visiting Peterborough to witness the excellent programs offered to our senior citizens. I attended a sod ceremony for a massive real estate development, a project that will build 1,200 homes, which means jobs.

Many people participated in various activities for a variety of reasons. Taking a stand is something we all have to do. To everyone who went to work yesterday and stayed open for business, let me thank you for choosing to stand up and be counted. Our city was not shut down. The people of Peterborough were the only real winners.

#### ANNUAL REPORT, INFORMATION AND PRIVACY COMMISSIONER INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS' EXPENDITURES REPORT

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** I beg to inform the House I have today laid upon the table the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario's 1995 annual report and the individual members' expenditures report for the fiscal year 1995-96. The members will find a copy of this report in their desks in the chamber.

#### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

##### RENT REGULATION

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** Over the past 10 years, previous governments have put stricter and stricter controls on rental housing. They said they wanted to protect tenants. I believe they thought their changes would help, but the reality is that they did just the opposite.

Rental buildings are getting more and more run down, and no new apartments are being built. In Toronto, for example, only 20 units were built last year, and that's in a city with a vacancy rate that's plunging to zero.

Our rental stock is on average over 25 years old, and much of it is crumbling. It's only going to get worse unless something is done to deal with this reality.

Over the past year, we consulted with landlord groups and we consulted with tenant groups. It became quite clear that on several issues their views are polarized.

Tenants need a system that protects them from skyrocketing rents and ensures that their homes are properly maintained, safe and secure. Our government wants this too.

Landlords, on the other hand, have told us they can't recover their costs for maintenance. We need to make the system more attractive so that landlords want to invest in their buildings and want to properly maintain them. Our government wants this too.

1350

For these reasons, we are proposing changes in the current system. We will continue to protect tenants from unfair rent increases. There will continue to be an annual guideline set each year. We will maintain the current calculation for setting the guideline and, like today, landlords will have to apply if they want to go above it.

A cap on the above-guideline increases will be maintained. Capital expenditure increases will be capped at 4% above the guideline. This cap is necessary to avoid the problems of the 1986-90 system when tenants were experiencing 30%, 40% and 50% increases. This will not happen under our new system.

Rent increases related to extraordinary operating costs such as municipal taxes, fees and utilities will not be capped. Landlords have no control over these costs and the resulting rent increases tend to be very low.



Tenants will still be able to make applications concerning rent reductions and illegal rent increases.

Tenants will be protected while they remain in their units. When a tenant moves out, however, a landlord can negotiate a market-based rent with the new tenant. Once the new tenant moves in, rent controls will once again apply.

As a result of this change, we will stop tracking maximum rents and get rid of the cumbersome rent registry.

These changes will give landlords greater incentive to maintain their buildings. It should also mean more investment in rental buildings, with the resulting economic growth and job creation.

The rules will be tougher for those landlords who refuse to properly maintain their buildings. Municipalities will have greater powers to enforce the maintenance and repair of existing rental stock and, in particular, to fine serious offenders of the property standards bylaws.

The proposed Tenant Protection Act will also have stronger provisions to keep landlords from harassing tenants. Fines will be increased and municipalities will have greater flexibility to lay charges.

Care home residents, land-lease communities and mobile home park residents will also be guaranteed protection. They will continue to have rent and tenancy protection as well as special rules to address their unique needs.

We have long aimed to make the system more efficient and responsive to tenants. Therefore, the Landlord and Tenant Act will be moved out of the courts and become part of the new legislation.

Tenants' rights won't change under the act. Matters will be resolved through an administrative body to streamline the dispute process and provide one-stop shopping in all tenancy-related matters. Our system will mean faster decisions.

A consultation paper that sets out our new direction is being released today. We invite comments from the people of this province through to August 30. We're also planning legislative committee hearings across the province throughout the summer and hope to introduce legislation in the fall.

We stated from the outset that we would not put forward a new rent control system without first ensuring tenants were protected against unfair rent increases, and we've done that. We wanted a system that would get tough on enforcing maintenance. We've done that. We wanted a system that would significantly improve the climate for new investment, and we've done that. We wanted a system that would streamline administration and cut red tape, and we've done that too.

We wanted to create a more balanced system that was fair for landlords, tenants and Ontario taxpayers. We believe we have found that balance.

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North):** Today, of course, it is a long-awaited statement we wanted from this minister which has taken so long. What this government has done is officially declare war on the tenants in our province. This paper, as I read it, is nothing more than a strategy to displace tenants so landlords can profit when a new tenant moves in, as he has indicated. It's

going to be a siege mentality in this province from now on in regard to tenants. This new system pits landlords against tenants. Tenants will now have the burden of disputing every problem with their landlord.

First, it was the cancellation of all non-profit housing; he came in with his sledgehammer and did that. Then they went on to reduce those who are on welfare by 22% to make sure the poor were being attacked. Mr Leach and his government seemed to have forgotten all about the people on the waiting lists for affordable accommodation. Speculation is afoot about selling off Ontario Housing to the private sector because it can do it better.

Who looks after those tenants? Where is this minister? This is a minister who wants to get out of the housing business and give it to the private sector. That's what they're doing. People are paying up to 50% and 60% of their income on rent. They cannot afford the current rents as we see them today. What your new system will do is force rents up, not down.

Don't forget about the seniors and the disabled. Don't forget that 80% of this province's disabled live in private rental accommodation. They, along with other tenants, will not be able to move. They'll be stuck in their homes. They'll be sentenced to their apartments because moving will mean an enormous rent increase. That's what you said. As soon as they move, they are subject to higher rents, and when they get in, they are stuck with those high rents anyhow.

Under this current system, newly constructed buildings are exempt from rent control for five years, as he talked about, but no one has built. In the new system, that won't change. Landlords will harass tenants to get out of their apartments, and you know it. As we see it, that way a landlord can get a tenant out, have an empty apartment, take the rent control off, hike up the rent, advertise, get a new tenant in and get a heftier rent. My God, what a system; quite a system to be put in place.

They will set up a whole new bureaucracy, they said, to deal with tenant harassment. This move, from a government that talks about cutting red tape and reducing government, really surprises me. I would like to see, when that bureaucracy is set up, what the cost will be.

It will not work. This system will mean higher rents for tenants. There's no way the market will force rents down. The motivation behind taking units off rent control is allowing landlords to jack rents up.

They are waiting until the last week of this House, as you have seen — as a matter of fact, the last day or two in the sitting — to announce this paper, even though the minister has known for a long time what plans he had calculated.

I am glad that many tenants have organized and confronted you and told you to take your hands off rent control. That's what they have done. Somehow you are playing the squeeze game to make sure they seem to be satisfied. This process will not work. Tenants will be in fear of what their rents will be if they should move. If you think that you have heard from the tenants already and that you have consulted, as you said, in the short time you gave to do this enormous change, I am advising every tenant out there to call Mr Leach, the minister.



Thanks for technology. The telephone number of the Minister of Housing is (416) 585-7000. Call him. Send him a fax and tell him what you think about this plan; 585-6470 is the fax number. I'm telling you that you'll be hearing from these tenants. We will be discussing in detail those six items in the legislation you want to change which will tamper with the protection of tenants so that you can let your friends convert and demolish those apartment buildings that we have protected over these years.

Take your hands off rent control. Make sure we have something that is fair to all.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** There you have it, the beginning of the end of rent control. The government has come out and has clearly chosen sides. In this province of Ontario the Conservative government, by this action, is saying that it's choosing the side of landlords and forgetting the side of the tenants, the people who are going to get it in the ear when it comes to what this legislation can do.

What's the government doing? It's hiding itself behind a façade of tenant protection. But the bottom line here is clear. What is it? Rents are going to go up in Ontario; there are no ifs, there are no buts, there are no two ways about it. What the government is saying is that if you build an apartment building in this province, it will never fall under rent control, which means that the tenants who move in will be under no protection from rent control, the landlord will totally have those tenants at their mercy, and the rents will go up according to what the landlord wants, with no regard for the tenant. As long as the market will bear the price, the payer will pay the bill; and that's what this thing is all about.

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They also try to hide behind the question of vacancy decontrol. Vacancy decontrol means quite simply, what? Rents are going to go up. The landlord is going to say, "I'm getting \$800 a month for my unit, I want to get \$900 rent for my unit, so I will harass and I will intimidate, I will do whatever I can to get that tenant to move out of the unit so I can jack the price up."

The government in its own report that it's putting out in this discussion paper is saying, by their own admission, that this is going to be an issue of harassment, because they have set up themselves an harassment policy within this legislation in a guise to be able to protect the tenant. But the reality is, there's no teeth in this, there's no detail in this, there are no staffing requirements that have been spelled out at this point. It means to say, quite frankly, that if you own an apartment building in the province of Ontario and you want to kick your tenant out so you can raise your rent, you will get the benefit of doing that.

I say to this government, shame, because in the end, who is going to pay? It is going to be the tenants who pay. It is clearly, as I say, another example where this government has chosen sides. This government is intent to race to the very bottom, as they can, when it comes to legislation in this province, to take away the controls and the protection a tenant has, because why? They want to choose the sides of landlords, they wanted to choose the sides of big money at the expense of the working people

of this province, the middle class of this province who rely on having affordable rents in order to be able to live, not counting what it means to the poor. It's going to be absolutely tragic for that particular group of people.

I say to the government, when a government forgets what its purpose is — and its purpose is to be able to protect all people in this society to make sure that they're treated fairly and equitably — I say that this government, quite frankly, is totally out to lunch when it comes to this particular issue. The tenants in this province are really at risk, and I would say to this government, in the end they should do the right thing, they should keep in place the legislation that was put in place by the NDP government, a piece of legislation that put protection of tenants squarely out in front and didn't try to hide behind the fact of trying to do something that it shouldn't. The bottom line is here, we need to protect tenants; and I say to the government, shame on you.

The other thing they're doing that I find quite interesting is they're taking away the protection of tenants to be able to settle their issues within the courts and to be able to do it within the rent control legislation. They're going to be setting up a tribunal system where tenants who disagree with what happens and how their landlords deal with them will be sent out in front of a tribunal. I would say that is an extremely bureaucratic process. In the end what it means to say is that the decisions will be made in the hands of bureaucrats, and not in the hands, under the auspices of legislation, through the legal system that is presently the situation today.

The government says that it's doing this, why? They're saying they're doing this because they want to build brand-new apartment buildings and they feel that rent control is the issue. The reality is, it is not rent control that is providing a roadblock to construction; it is a question of how much it costs to build a building. If the government was truly serious about trying to spur economic development and having new buildings built — and I notice that the minister is agreeing with me — the reality is, if you want to be able to increase the ability to construct apartment buildings in Ontario, you need to deal with the other issue.

This is nothing more than a guise of trying to repay the people who supported the Conservative Party and Conservative candidates in the last election by giving them huge contributions to their campaign coffers. And what did they get in exchange? The tenants are taken hostage in the province of Ontario, and the landlords are going to reap the benefits, and the tenants will pay the price. I say, shame on the government.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

GUY PAUL MORIN

**Mr Robert Chiarelli (Ottawa West):** My question is to the Attorney General. Minister, Guy Paul Morin's mother, Ida, is in the gallery today on behalf of the Morin family. For one year now, you and your Premier have been promising to quickly establish a public inquiry



to determine who is accountable for this gross miscarriage of justice in the Guy Paul Morin case.

Mrs Morin today delivered a letter to the Premier which concludes by stating, "Guy Paul was exonerated on January 23, 1995, but in the eyes of the people of Ontario and Canada, this doesn't right the wrongs done by incompetent public servants and government officials to Guy Paul and his family."

It is now clear that you are in a conflict of interest. Whatever excuses you may offer to explain away the delays of an inquiry cannot now have any credibility. As the government's top legal adviser you are on the one hand a defendant in a lawsuit for compensation and on the other you are mandated to establish a public inquiry on the same set of facts, which facts may serve to increase compensation. As the chief law officer for the province you are bound to act ethically. Minister, you are in a conflict of interest.

My question is this: In view of this conflict, will you now authorize Justice Gold to completely and independently establish the public inquiry which has been ordered?

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** It has been the intention of the government to ensure that such an independent inquiry will take place and we are in the course of making those arrangements.

**Mr Chiarelli:** That answer is simply not satisfactory in view of the time that has expired, but I have a question about Justice Gold's role. In February 1995 the then Attorney General stated that her advice from Justice Gold was "very clear" that the commission and the courts will be able, at the same time, to deal with both the issue of compensation and the issue of a public inquiry: "It is much more important in the public interest to go ahead with a public inquiry in as expeditious a manner as possible."

Some 16 months later, on May 28, 1996, you told this House you are still working with Justice Gold and taking his advice. My question is this: Has Justice Gold changed his mind, after 16 months, about establishing a public inquiry as expeditiously as possible? If so, will you tell us why he has been supporting delays in establishing the inquiry?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** I continue to take advice from Justice Gold, who is mandated to deal with a certain aspect of this issue. He is dealing with it, and I am taking his advice.

**Mr Chiarelli:** From time to time over the last eight or 10 months, you have indicated your inability to find the necessary judges from outside Ontario's jurisdiction to be appointed to the inquiry. My question to you is this, and I'd like you to be very specific: How many judges whom you or your officials have approached have declined appointment to this inquiry, and how many, if any, have agreed to participate to date? Will you give us a date for the start of the public inquiry or will you continue to stonewall it until you can jawbone down a settlement on financial terms on the civil case?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** We have indicated that we will proceed with an inquiry and we will be doing what has to be done to ensure that inquiry is an independent

inquiry that examines the issues that are outstanding and that are the cause for concern. We will comply with that mandate.

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## RENT REGULATION

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. It concerns the plan introduced today which can only be regarded as this government's tenant "rejection" package. It will take any controls which exist now off all new units in perpetuity, but more importantly it will allow rents to increase to any level possible once someone has moved out of a unit. It has also anticipated that this will cause landlords to intimidate, to go after tenants to get them out of their apartments because it's made it more favourable to do so. In anticipation of this, it's created a whole new bureaucracy to deal with intimidation by landlords but one that won't work. It has set up, as it has in so many areas in this province, friction between landlords and tenants and it has broken its promise by taking controls off units.

I ask the minister today, is there one thing in this tenant "rejection" package which actually protects tenants in this province?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I know what it will do. It won't give you a system that was in between 1986 and 1990 where we had 30%, 40% and 50% increases. If there was ever a rent control system that failed, it was yours.

We're going to put before the public over the summer a consultation paper that provides a balance between tenants' rights and landlords' rights to get a reasonable return on their investment. At the present time there's absolutely no fairness in the system, and we intend to bring fairness to it.

**Mr Kennedy:** It's unfortunate the minister chooses not to answer the question and at least to agree, admit for sake of clarity so that the tenants out there will know, and the landlords who have been given a disservice by the way this is structured, that this government has broken its promises. The Premier made a promise to lower rents. Where are the lower rents in this?

The minister has decided to give away all the enforcement of standards to municipalities. Municipalities will charge user fees, municipalities will get no extra money from the government to enforce those standards and the access to the courts is going to be cut off.

Minister, agree at least very clearly that the promise you made in your riding to be elected and the promise the Premier made in the constituency of York South, that rents would be lowered, was broken in the consultation position paper you produced today.

**Hon Mr Leach:** We've kept every promise we made. We said we wouldn't touch the rent control system until we had something that was better, something that was fairer, and this is fairer and better. They will see it. As we go out to consultation over the summer they will have an opportunity to have input. If there's an opportunity to improve the positions we put forward we'll be glad to do that but I think, as I said earlier, what we put forward is a fair and balanced package.



**Mr Kennedy:** The disappointment is profound because the minister is unable to come to terms with the essence of what he's presented to the House today, that after all the fear that's been created out there among tenants, all the insecurity, it's now come true: People are sentenced to their own apartments. They can't move for fear of how much that will cost them.

Rather than deal with the housing shortage, none of the factors that are really causing the problems with rental stock have been addressed in this proposal today. Instead we will see as people move — some 25% of apartments get vacated each year — the end of rent controls. Minister, for the sake of the integrity of this House and for your own integrity, admit today that rent controls effectively have ended in this province. This is what you've said in the consultation paper and this is what we need to discuss over the summer.

**Hon Mr Leach:** The only thing that bothers me about this conversation is having to look over at those buttons that were bought and paid for by the city of Toronto. That's really irritating, but that's another issue.

We have put this consultation together after major discussions with landlords' groups and tenants' groups. We've consulted with tenants, we've consulted with landlords and we know we've got a system that is balanced, better than what is there now. As we continue to go on I know we'll improve it, and we intend to have the standing committee go out to the public this summer and we'll bring in legislation this fall.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** New question.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** It's interesting to notice that the Liberal Party, which voted against rent control, now wants to pretend that they're in favour of it.

My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Your package means the end of rent control. You want landlords to be able to jack up the rent when a tenant moves out, you want landlords to get a bigger rent increase for sitting tenants as well and you've removed rent controls entirely for new buildings. Are you saying that rents aren't high enough? Is that your point?

**Hon Mr Leach:** To the leader of the third party, congratulations on your election; I never had an opportunity to do that yesterday.

We know that under the present formula the NDP brought in, right now the maximum rents in many cases are higher than the market rents, so if you wanted a system that put rents up higher than they should be, then you should keep your system.

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Leach:** That's right, absolutely right. In many instances there are people who own apartment buildings who will tell you they couldn't get the amount of rents that were put under the controls of rent control.

The system we're bringing forward is a very balanced system that has been negotiated between landlords and tenants. We want to put it on the street to make sure we get further input, and we'll do that.

**Mr Hampton:** I want to be sure I follow the logic here. I believe what the minister said is that rents are too high and therefore he's going to bring in a system which will allow them to move higher. Minister, you're clearly hoping that tenants overlook one basic fact: Your package

will mean the end of rent control. That's what it means. As you just said, your package will mean higher rents.

Tenants move a lot. In fact, your own study shows that more than two thirds of tenants move at least once every five years. This means that more than two thirds of tenants will face an unregulated rent increase within the next five years. You don't have to look very far down the road to see that means the end of rent control. Why don't you just come right out and say to people that you want rents to be higher, that that's your real goal here? Why don't you just come out and say it?

**Hon Mr Leach:** To the leader opposite, what we want to do is make sure we have a system that will entice the industry back into building more apartments. Right at the present time, tenants have absolutely no choice. If we don't get the industry building more apartments, things are going to get worse and worse for tenants. What we have to do is develop a balanced system that gives incentives for the industry to get back into building while still having rent control on for sitting tenants.

**Mr Hampton:** What I think I heard was the minister say that rents aren't high enough and he wants to push up rents. He says that by pushing up rents he thinks he can get more apartments. But I want to say to the minister, the average household income of tenants is only \$34,000 a year. More than one third have incomes of less than \$20,000 a year. Many are seniors on fixed incomes. So I guess I have to say to the minister, this is what you think is a good thing, that lower-income people, that seniors on fixed incomes are going to pay more so that your friends the landlords get more? Is this your idea of a good thing?

**Hon Mr Leach:** As we all know, most seniors live in their buildings and they stay in their buildings, and as long as they're there under existing — they have absolutely nothing to be worried about. This fearmongering that's going on by the opposition is totally unnecessary. They have rent controls on their units. It's the same formula the NDP brought in. What they're so upset about I don't understand. I can only repeat that the package we're putting forward is fair and balanced and it will work.

**The Speaker:** New question, the leader of the third party.

**Mr Hampton:** To the same minister, you said, and you alluded to it here today, that landlords told you that if you got rid of rent control, in other words, if you got rid of rent control and allowed rents to rise, they would build 20,000 new units in Metro alone. You've repeatedly said that the aim of your reform is to get the landlords to build, but your own report, the Lampert report issued last fall, says that getting rid of rent controls won't do it, that it's not the answer. The landlords want a whole bunch of other goodies too. The landlords want other things.

What guarantees have landlords given you that they will build affordable rental housing as a result of the end of rent control that you've announced today? What guarantee?

**Hon Mr Leach:** To the member opposite, they said that if we put a fairer system together, get rid of the unfairness that's in the system, they will come back and build, and I believe they will build.



The member of the opposition is right that rent control alone is not going to entice the industry back. It's one of the issues. One of the other issues is the unfairness in the tax system, and why the city of Toronto, which buys the buttons on Save Rent Control, charges tenants four times the amount of tax that they do for a single-family home is a mystery to me. So if we address the tax issue, if we address a number of other issues, we're confident that the industry will come back and build apartment buildings once again.

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**Mr Hampton:** I didn't hear a guarantee there. What I heard is that poorer people, that fixed-income people, that seniors on fixed income, that people who are at the lower level of incomes in the province are going to pay more, and there's absolutely no guarantee that there is going to be more apartment stock, more housing stock, no guarantee whatsoever. So the minister is saying rents should go up. You've cut off the supply of non-profit and co-op housing but you won't guarantee any solution here.

Minister, will you admit that the only incentive you've given to the private sector, the only incentive here, is the incentive to make big profits by getting rid of their tenants, and that the end of rent control won't guarantee a single unit of new affordable housing? We've got no guarantee.

**Hon Mr Leach:** What I can absolutely guarantee is that it sure won't be any worse than what you had, with 20 new units built in the GTA last year. That's shameful. Some 60,000 people move into this area every year, and there are absolutely no new apartment buildings being built.

We know that the industry is anxious to get out there and build when they can be assured they'll get a reasonable return on their investment, and if we make the changes we're planning to make, we know they're going to get out there and build, something they would never do under your legislation.

**Mr Hampton:** The issue here is any guarantee that new rental accommodation will be built, and the minister can't offer any, so he's relying on other excuses now.

Minister, I'm going to send over to you three election leaflets put out by the member for High Park-Swansea, the member for Eglinton and your candidate in York South. They say things like, "Mike Harris will strengthen rent controls, not cancel them," "Rent controls will remain," and "Mike Harris will maintain controls for all tenants in rental units."

Minister, you are scrapping rent controls. The whole thrust of your policy is to increase rents, and you can't guarantee that a single unit of affordable housing will be built to compensate. Will you admit that you have broken the promise made by your colleagues to tenants? Will you admit that you've broken a promise?

**Hon Mr Leach:** Actually, I can tell the honourable member that we've kept the promise. What we've done is brought in a system that is going to be fairer and is going to be more balanced and is going to provide more choice for tenants. Right now, tenants have limited choices because the policies of the previous government wouldn't entice anybody to build anything in this city or in this province. So what we're doing is to ensure that tenants have choice.

I can tell you that in any area where there is a large vacancy rate, landlords are offering incentives for tenants to sign two-year leases. In Ottawa, for example, they're offering free televisions or free microwaves to sign a two-year lease. Why? Because there is supply and there is competition. Without supply and without competition, tenants are trapped. They were trapped under your system; they'll be let free under ours.

## PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole):** My question is for the Minister of Health. On July 15, your new user fees for prescriptions needed by sick seniors, those on social assistance and those coping with mental disability will kick in across the province. The confusion regarding the implementation of these new user fees is widespread, Minister. You acknowledged this confusion when you changed the implementation date from June to July 15. Furthermore, in a letter to my colleague the member for Port Arthur, you stated, "The Ministry of Health recognizes that collecting the proposed copayment may present some challenges."

Minister, are you going to clarify the confusion regarding this poorly conceived idea? Answer the question of how you're going to ensure seniors are informed that they have to apply. How are you going to justify that fees will vary from community to community and pharmacy to pharmacy? How are you going to deal with the compliance problems that people in long-term-care facilities, sick seniors, are going to face and those people with mental disability who are trying to cope in our community? How are you going to tell all of those people that you've solved the problems, the challenges that you've identified, when you bring in the new user fees that you promised during the election you would not bring in?

**Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Health):** It's interesting. When Sheila Copps, her federal cousin, was in the by-election, she blamed this government, which has fully preserved the health care budget, in fact increased it, for cuts in health care. The only cuts going on in Canada in health care are the \$2.2 billion that the federal Liberal Party is taking away from the seniors and the children and the patients and the sick and elderly in this province. So let's clear up the record once and for all from this person, who's a member of the Liberal Party of Canada and Ontario. I'm getting a little tired of this.

Secondly, user fees are illegal in Canada under the Canada Health Act. If the copayments, for example, that are in every other province in Canada, including provinces run by four Liberal premiers, were illegal for some reason under the Canada Health Act, then I expect Mr Dingwall and Mr Chrétien would be clawing back those provinces for illegal user fees. That is not happening. These are not user fees and in fact they are the lowest copayments on any drug plan in Canada, the envy of all Canadians. We're sorting through the technical difficulties, keeping in mind that Ontario is not breaking new ground with this program; we're simply catching up to nine other provinces who have gone through all of these problems and solved them to the satisfaction of the people of their provinces.



**Mrs Caplan:** The minister can rant, he can rave, but his rhetoric is not going to belie the fact that he promised they would bring in no new user fees, and on July 15 Mike Harris and the Conservative government are bringing in new user fees for the drug program. Minister, the technical difficulties that you have just referred to are hurting real people, and you have an obligation to stand in this House today and explain to those people how you're going to protect them.

I don't understand why you are hell-bent for putting in these new user fees. These user fees are going to affect sick seniors, sick children, disabled children, people who are suffering from mental disability. Will you confirm in this House today that you are planning to waive the user fees for recovering drug addicts on methadone? And if you are, how do you justify this action to people who are coping with mental illness in the community, who have compliance problems and need to take their drugs in order to survive day by day? What do you say to mothers with sick children who need antibiotics and are on social assistance and what do you say to those senior citizens living in long-term-care facilities? How do you tell people where they are supposed to fill in their application forms, and how do you justify waiving a copayment for recovering drug addicts but forcing others to pay the new user fees? Stand in this House today and answer those questions and forget your silly rhetoric.

**Hon Mr Wilson:** I say to the honourable member, that may be the way she views a \$2.2-billion cut in health and social services in transfer payments over two years from your federal cousins in Ottawa, but I don't think it's silly rhetoric. It is a reality that this government is dealing with in terms of fully preserving and enhancing our health care system. That is a reality and it is a minor miracle that we've been able to fully preserve the health care budget in this province and in fact enhance that budget in spite of the cuts.

I admit I've not raised this point very often, but my blood was boiling when Sheila Copps was running around this province saying Mike Harris and Jim Wilson cut health care. Nothing could be further from the truth. All of the facts in this House and in this government are contrary to what the honourable member and her party, at the federal level anyway, have been saying and she's been saying around this province too.

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With respect to the implementation concerns the honourable member has, I have had the opportunity to discuss this with other health ministers in Canada, and we've got a lot of good ideas from those nine other provinces that have gone through this. Our plan is still the most generous plan in Canada. We are able, by having everybody pay a little bit in the copayment, to expand the program to 140,000 working poor families in addition to those that are getting help with their drug costs today. It's a good-news item.

As seniors' minister I met recently with CARP, the Canadian Association of Retired Persons, and with the seniors' consumers association's Jane Leitch. They didn't even mention this issue, I say to the honourable member, because seniors in this province, in the spirit of generosity and in recognition of the federal government cuts and

in wanting to fully preserve the Ontario drug benefit program, don't mind paying a few dollars to be generous to their fellow citizens, expand the program and save the program from your federal cousin's cuts. That's the generosity of spirit of the seniors in this province, and that's being expressed by their groups.

## YOUNG OFFENDERS

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** My question is to the Solicitor General and the Minister of Correctional Services. Minister, in addition to the allegations of abuse on March 1 at Elgin-Middlesex that our caucus has been raising over the last few weeks, I have learned that at least three more young people were allegedly assaulted approximately two weeks later at the same institution.

Following these incidents, apparently these young people were isolated for varying periods of time. At least one of those young people who was put in solitary confinement says he was not allowed phone calls until he was due in court some days later. I have been told that this individual appeared in court with bruises to his face and cuts to the inside of his mouth which he claimed to his lawyer, his parent and the child advocate were caused by a beating at the hands of correctional staff at Middlesex.

Minister, these are additional incidents of young people allegedly being assaulted while in the care of your ministry. We know these are young people who have been charged with crimes; that's why they're incarcerated. But we're also talking about people who have basic human rights in Ontario in 1996. I would remind you that both the Young Offenders Act and the Ministry of Correctional Services Act forbid corporal punishment of young people.

It's absolutely outrageous that this situation continues. It's your responsibility as the minister to ensure that young people are safe and secure while in the care of your ministry, that they are not mistreated and abused by anyone, especially correctional staff. If you and your office had taken the allegations of abuse seriously when they were first raised by the mother who called your office, if you had read your briefing note of March 7 and taken account of the concerns about safety, it may well be that these other young persons would not have experienced the abuse that they claim occurred.

Minister, won't you finally admit that your inaction on behalf of young people in your care resulted in these additional problems at EMDC?

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** I have indicated on a number of occasions now that I believe the ministry acted in a responsible fashion upon hearing of the concerns expressed by the child advocate. In fact I've said, and the opposition for reasons best known to them want to continue to ignore what the child advocate has said since that time, indicating her complete support for the response of the ministry with respect to the safety of young offenders. Certainly any allegations are treated seriously. I've indicated in this House on a number of occasions that we take these allegations very seriously. They're being properly and thoroughly investigated, and I believe we're handling them in a most appropriate way.



**Mrs Boyd:** Well, to make matters worse, the parent of one of these young offenders called the superintendent, Mr George Simpson, shortly after being told of the assault, and I'm sure you can guess what his response was. It was consistent with his memo of June 4 to the regional manager responding to the child advocate's report. He claims, as apparently he does when anyone complains, that young people in the care of the ministry are manipulators, liars and cannot be believed when they claim abuse. The parent was dissatisfied with his dismissive response and claims the superintendent refused to pursue this matter any further, again breaking the rules set out in your own policy around allegations of physical assault.

Are you aware that this young person, who alleges to have been assaulted by staff at Elgin-Middlesex, also felt intimidated by the presence of staff people who had witnessed the beating when he tried to contact the child advocate's office to complain about the incident? This amounts to interference and intimidation, exactly what the child advocate has alleged is endemic at EMDC in her report.

Isn't it true that these additional incidents are included in that child advocate's report? Isn't it true that this is not just one incident that took place on one evening after exceptional circumstances, it is numerous allegations of assault that took place over weeks and, for all we know, over months and possibly even years?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** This is a very selective use of the views of the child advocate and the opposition, especially the NDP, have continued to ignore, for political purposes I would suggest, the opinions of the child advocate with respect to the response of the ministry and the minister in this particular situation. If they want to sit down and talk to the child advocate with respect to her views in terms of how the ministry responded, they would have a totally different story to portray here in the House today.

#### COURT DOCUMENTS

**Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton North):** My question is to the Attorney General. I've recently heard about a pilot project that's supposed to be a collaboration between the local crown attorney's office and the local police. Could you please explain to the Legislature what this pilot project is and how it can benefit my community?

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** I thank the member for Brampton North for the question. We have indeed set up eight pilot sites in Brampton, Hamilton, London, Ottawa, Sault Ste Marie, Thunder Bay, Whitby and Windsor. Formerly police briefs that have been used in crown prosecutions were stored at local police stations. Copies had to be made for court preparation, there was a lot of duplication of effort, materials being stored in separate locations.

What has now changed is that the original police briefs will be held in the integrated case management unit at the courthouses. There's no longer going to be a need to make copies of those briefs. There will no longer be a need to transport those briefs back and forth. This then will free up crown attorney time and police time and will

result in savings to the justice system so that we can focus on prosecuting serious crime and ensuring that officers are out on the road keeping our communities safe.

**Mr Spina:** This program has been heralded following the recent Thunder Bay unveiling of this unit. As a tool to make administration of justice more direct and efficient, how will this new unit actually accomplish this?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** We have designed this new integrated unit to improve efficiency and reduce costs associated with the handling and storage of police and crown documents required for prosecution. This, as I said, will save travelling time, staff time in duplicating copies, and if any changes need to be made to documents they can be done very quickly.

Improved efficiency, the elimination of duplication and resulting cost savings are key elements in the ministry's plan to modernize the justice system and make it more accessible, timely and affordable. Our goal is to streamline the justice system and make it less cumbersome, less unwieldy and more available to those who need access to justice.

1440

#### JUSTICE SYSTEM

**Ms Annamarie Castrilli (Downsview):** My question is also for the Attorney General, following on the heels of the last question. Yesterday in this House, the Solicitor General stated that he was looking forward to meeting with the police commissioner of New York to look at the crackdown on crime in that city. There it seems that the police and the justice authorities take crime very seriously and prosecute them all to the fullest. In fact the crime rate has plunged by 30% in that city.

You stated in this House in no uncertain terms that criminal prosecutions would not be reduced. In fact on May 13 you stated, "I have no plans to scale back the prosecution of crime in the province of Ontario.... We will not be scaling back prosecutions in this province one iota." Despite your denials and despite the Solicitor General's obvious differing stance on crime, a document by your ministry entitled Draft Screening Directives suggests that you're preparing to do just that. In fact your response just previously indicates that. That documents states: "Increased pressure on criminal courts and reduced resources are causing the ministry to change its prosecutorial screening standard."

Can you confirm that you are considering classifying such offences as death threats, fraud, break and enter as less significant and less deserving of resources, and are you disagreeing with the Solicitor General on the procedures on how to crack down on crime in this province?

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** In order to avoid the problem that the former Liberal government had when they ignored the Askov crisis and they were the direct cause of having 70,000 cases thrown out of court, we recognize that the status quo is not possible. What we are doing in the Ministry of the Attorney General is working with senior officials, working with crown attorneys out in the field who know best their communities and develop-



ing strategies so that we can ensure that all serious crime is properly prosecuted in the most conventional way and that less serious crimes can be dealt with by some innovative means that will ensure the appropriate penalty for all crimes but that will not permit the jettisoning of crime from courts as was caused by the Liberal government during the David Peterson years when 70,000 cases, among them murder cases, manslaughter cases, drunk driving cases, sexual assaults, spousal assaults, were thrown out of court because they had no strategy to ensure that they could deal with all the cases coming into the court system. What did they do? They just let the cases be thrown out and made our communities less safe. That's why we are not resting with the status quo; we're dealing with the problem to ensure that we can always prosecute crime properly.

**Ms Castrilli:** That answer just defies belief. What the minister is actually saying is that he is prepared to let criminals walk away. What the minister is actually saying is that he's going to say to a young woman whose life is in danger because of a death threat that her right to have that investigated does not exist. He is going to say to a senior citizen in his own home that he is no longer safe; that when somebody breaks and enters into that home, there will be no prosecution. What kind of message is that to the criminals of this province and what kind of message is that to the people of Ontario?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** I might suggest that the member for Downsview pay a visit to the courthouse in her own riding at 1000 Finch Avenue, the North York provincial court. There she might get some insight from Mr MacDonald, the senior crown attorney in that jurisdiction, who can tell you a little bit about what crown attorneys are working on in order to ensure that they can manage the caseload that comes into the courts.

I might tell the member about the spousal abuse project that's being set up in North York provincial court, a scheme to deal with spousal assault, to deal with wife assault, to provide counselling, to look at different ways to solve problems.

I might invite the member for Downsview, who thinks she's a very enlightened person — I think she would become a little more enlightened if she visited the court in her own community, to understand how crime is being dealt with, to understand how communities are being kept safe and to understand how crown attorneys are dealing with the intake of cases so that we don't have a repeat of what her government did to the justice system in this province, when people were allowed to go free because they couldn't prosecute the cases that were before the courts.

#### YOUNG OFFENDERS

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** My question is to the Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services. Minister, you've tried for the last few weeks to distance yourself from the institutional abuse that is alleged to have happened at Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre. You've blamed ministry officials; you've blamed systemic problems within the ministry.

Young people are accusing the management at Elgin-Middlesex of assaulting them, and the management staff

in turn say the youth suffered injuries because they assaulted each other. Correctional officers are accusing Elgin-Middlesex managers of ignoring the allegations of assault, and so are parents.

You deliberately refuse to answer any questions and continue to ask us to believe you remained unaware of these allegations for three months. You refuse to take responsibility for these very disturbing series of events that are hanging over your ministry. Minister, you are the one who must be held accountable for this mess. So I ask you very seriously and very directly, which one of the half-dozen investigations that you have set up will be investigating the role you and your political office played in this sad, disgraceful affair?

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** There are two investigations, one being conducted by the police and one being conducted through the internal investigations unit within the ministry.

**Mrs Boyd:** Minister, you said yesterday, and I'm going to quote from Hansard from June 24:

"...I had briefing sessions on a daily basis with the acting deputy minister.

"The ministry of corrections at the best of times is a challenging ministry in terms of the incident reports, but I feel comfortable with the reports I had on the basis of the efforts I made to try and keep on top of the wide range of issues."

In fact, you've demonstrated the complete opposite. You are not up to the challenge of your ministry. You've shown your incompetence by not knowing about these very disturbing allegations until three months after the fact. You have the gall to say you feel comfortable with the briefings you were receiving, when there was a very serious omission day after day by your most senior official, whom you say with no shame you met with on a daily basis and you're comfortable with those briefings.

Minister, you cannot be the judge and jury of whether you acted appropriately and whether your ministry officials acted appropriately since you've already concluded by making this statement, and frankly many others, that you're quite comfortable with their actions as well as your own. To resolve this issue, Minister, we must put this whole matter before a parliamentary committee. We need to hear from Michael Jordan, the acting deputy minister; we need to hear from your deputy minister, Elaine Todres, and from Neil McKerrell, assistant deputy minister of correctional services — from your own political staff and, frankly, from you.

Minister, since you do not have the decency to step aside until these investigations are concluded, will you at the very least refer this scandal to a parliamentary committee?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I will await the outcome of the two investigations that are currently under way before I make any determination on whether or not any further action is required.

1450

#### RURAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth):** My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.



Although I've never claimed to be the most technologically advanced person — did I say that right? — I am rapidly learning the many benefits of technology and what it can offer to the rural areas of Ontario such as the riding of Perth.

I'm amazed by the number of my constituents who are putting this new industry to work as a method of obtaining up-to-the-minute information on everything from the daily weather forecast to the latest trading prices. It would appear that these advances are rapidly becoming necessary for members of rural communities to stay competitive in the new world markets.

Access to telecommunications would seem to be of great importance to the future economic prospects of rural communities, and I would like to ask the minister what role the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is playing in regard to the important rural infrastructure issue.

**Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** I thank the honourable member for Perth for his question. We always measure agriculture with weather and markets, but communications is very important to today's modern agriculture. I'm pleased to tell you that the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs has been negotiating with Bell Canada and other telecommunications people to establish an advisory committee to better address the needs of rural Ontario. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture, along with other groups, is represented on this committee. We used the forum to make sure that Bell Canada is well aware of the needs in the telecommunications of our rural and food producers in rural Ontario. Of course, this summer my colleague Mr Beaubien, the member for Lambton, who is also my parliamentary assistant, is working on that very subject. We are addressing the need for better communications in rural Ontario.

**Mr Bert Johnson:** It is good to hear that this ministry, along with the rest of the government, I might add, is on top of things. I look forward to the parliamentary assistant's visit to the riding of Perth to discuss these issues and the potential benefits to all Ontarians.

Of course, technological advancement always has a cost, and this new telecommunications infrastructure will be no exception. Does the Minister of Agriculture intend to provide any funding assistance to increase access to telecommunications and improve the economic activity in rural areas such as Perth?

**Hon Mr Villeneuve:** Yes, the rural areas are going to get some financial support. Colleagues in the Legislature will know that in the budget the Minister of Finance brought in recently there is \$1.25 million to support student employment on farms; there is a rebate on farm building products of up to \$20 million that farmers will be receiving if indeed they spend on expansion; and of course the Grow Ontario project has \$15 million to promote research, development and competitiveness in rural Ontario. I would like to advise all members of this Legislature that this money is very much available for new projects to improve communications in the food-producing areas of Ontario.

## WATER QUALITY

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** My question is for the Minister of Environment and Energy. In the Hyde Park dump along the Niagara River there is over a tonne of dioxin, the largest single concentration of dioxin found anywhere I believe in the world. All along the Niagara River there are dozens of old toxic waste dumps that are leaching toxic materials into the Niagara River. Aquatic life, including fish, those which are found adjacent to those sites along the Niagara River, is growing tumours. The Niagara River flows into Lake Ontario, which is the source of drinking water for the city of Toronto and many other municipalities. Could you tell us how you can possibly justify the dismantling of the special environmental project team which had been established by your previous Conservative government and kept by two other governments to monitor and ensure the cleanup of the Niagara River?

**Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Environment and Energy):** We are very concerned about any issues of toxic material entering our waterways or soils throughout the province. We are unable to continue every single project that has been in place over the years. We are working very hard at our core business, which is attempting to deal with all of the water and soil and air issues of the province. Right now that is an issue that we continue to work on with the federal government as much as possible.

**Mr Bradley:** If I had asked this question about eight years ago, the world would have come to a standstill.

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** You would be asking it to yourself.

**Mr Bradley:** I tell the member from Ottawa who has such a big mouth over there that in 1987 the previous government signed an agreement to look after the monitoring and cleanup of the Niagara River, and on that occasion it was said that unless there was action to follow the signing of that agreement, the agreement would be worthless.

What we're seeing today, I tell the member and the minister, is a dismantling of a special environmental team that is supposed to be monitoring all progress on the cleanup of the Niagara River, which has many toxic dumps adjacent to it. You are totally dismantling this team, totally undermining the effort of the province of Ontario to protect the drinking and recreational water for the people of Toronto and all of the other communities that get or use the water in Lake Ontario.

Minister, will you not reconsider this decision and re-establish the team that was in place to protect the environment and particularly the drinking and recreational water of all those residents who live on Lake Ontario?

**Hon Mrs Elliott:** There's not a day goes by that in my news clippings I don't read about dumps leaking or old sites that are being discovered. It's not something new that's just happened as this government has come into power. These are environmental problems that have been occurring for years and years and years. We are now attempting to clean them up.

I can say to my colleague across the way that Ontario is showing leadership in a number of issues: many, many



issues. In many issues we are the leaders, bringing other provinces together with the federal government to try and solve problems that are beyond just one jurisdiction alone.

#### SERVICES FOR ABUSED WOMEN

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** My question today is for the minister responsible for women's issues. Yesterday the Barrie and district rape crisis line held a news conference about the holdup in their funding. For a government that's so big on business planning, you have a pretty funny way of flowing money to your transfer payments.

The rape crisis line issued an announcement of their news conference last Friday, and lo and behold, on Monday they received a couple of calls, one from bureaucrats and one from your staff, saying that their funding would be forthcoming. This is after trying to get hold of people and get word on their funding for months. Nothing.

My question is, is this your new way of doing business? Do agencies providing vital services to abused and assaulted women have to call a news conference to get their funding?

**Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues):** I would suggest that the Barrie and district rape crisis centre doesn't have to hold a news conference. They just have to get in touch with us, as we tried to get in touch with them on Friday, and they'll have their cheque tomorrow.

**Ms Churley:** I would like to say to the minister that they tried to get hold of you; they tried to talk to people. Nobody would get back to them.

Minister, you are gutting the Ontario women's directorate. Now I know why nobody has been answering the phones there. There's hardly anybody left to answer the phones. Your business plan has totally —

#### *Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Order. I'm having a problem to hear the question.

**Ms Churley:** — whittled down the work of the directorate. In fact, your continued use of the term "community safety" as a replacement for "violence against women" is creating speculation that you intend to dissolve the directorate and transfer those programs to the Solicitor General, God forbid. Your layoff of most of the staff in this directorate only furthers this speculation.

Minister, will you tell us today what exactly are your plans for the Ontario women's directorate?

**Hon Mrs Cunningham:** The Ontario women's directorate is alive and well. I can tell you right now we have a business plan. It is promoting actively and supporting agencies such as the Barrie and district rape crisis centre. We have a plan for economic independence for women, and we're putting over \$100 million into programs that support women who have been victims of assault and violence.

In spite of what the opposition keeps saying to our communities, we continue to fund 97 shelters, 34 sexual assault centres, 27 hospital-based sexual assault treatment centres, 16 male batterer programs, 13 crown offices for

victim-witness programs — expanded to 26, as my colleague the Attorney General announced last week — four programs in the Solicitor General's agenda expanded to 20 next year.

I don't understand why you continue to perpetuate the image that the Ontario government and the people of Ontario are not out there to support women, because they are. The only person that we ever hear from is you, from your riding in Riverdale, promoting this kind of propaganda and encouraging the people in Barrie and district to have to send out this kind of brochure when in fact they just got \$75,000 from the Minister of Health, and quite frankly, like the Minister of Health, most of us are pretty fed up with the fearmongering that you are doing to women across the province of Ontario.

#### EDUCATION OF INSTITUTIONALIZED CHILDREN

**Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre):** My question is to the Minister of Education and Training with regard to section 27 programs and those students in care and treatment in hospitals and correctional institutions. What commitment are you prepared to make to individuals receiving education in hospitals and correctional institutions?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** I thank the honourable member for the question. There have been some reports, some stories recently that grants and the provision of services by boards to young people who cannot attend a school because they're involved in a correctional or health care facility — they're called section 27 grants because they're made under section 27 of the GLGs — that there may be a withdrawal of some of these services. I assure the honourable member that our ministry is monitoring these programs and the supply of these services because we believe, and I think all boards across Ontario believe, that each child in Ontario, regardless of his or her circumstances, is entitled to a quality education system and access to a quality education system.

This current year the amount of money involved in section 27 grants to school boards is \$68.5 million, and there'll be some 6,505 children serviced under the section 27 grants. We are monitoring that to make sure those services are provided.

#### JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** To the Minister of Education and Training: Our leader asked you a question about two weeks ago concerning a directive that was issued by your ministry to the isolate boards, and it instructed those boards that if they wanted to continue to deliver junior kindergarten programs, they would be required to impose an increase in the property tax by 5%. We called several more isolate boards and they confirmed that this is what was required of them. Some will have to increase property tax if they continue the program; some will not be able to continue.

Minister, it appears that you have two sets of rules. On one hand your government is opposed to tax increases, but on the other hand you and your government are



instructing certain communities to increase their property taxes even though they can continue the program without being required to do so.

Will you reconsider this decision and will you give the isolate school boards the options of finding the funding without having to increase their taxes?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** I thank the honourable member for the question. I believe we did address this question a couple of weeks ago. As I'm sure the honourable member is aware, the way the funding works for isolate boards is considerably different from the way it works for boards that fall under the regular GLG structure. In fact, the province funds almost all education services in the isolate boards because generally there is not a large community to draw from for a local tax base.

The provisions under the GLG for isolate board funding are different from those for other boards and there is an attempt, whenever there is a change in funding by the ministry, to make sure that the same circumstances apply to the isolate boards as to the surrounding board areas so that they're on an equal footing and that the residents who are served in an isolate school board are on the same footing as the residents and taxpayers of the surrounding areas. In fact, that is what has been attempted by the ministry; that's the reason why we've had the changes to the funding model that we announced this year. I believe that the purpose of those grants is to make sure there's an equitable funding system and equitable community support by all those boards.

#### VISITOR

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** I've been informed that we have a visitor from Beaches-Woodbine in the gallery, a former member, Mr Thomas Wardell.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND CONSULTATION

##### IMPROVEMENT ACT, 1996

##### LOI DE 1996 AMÉLIORANT LE PROCESSUS D'ÉVALUATION ENVIRONNEMENTALE ET DE CONSULTATION PUBLIQUE

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 76, An Act to improve environmental protection, increase accountability and enshrine public consultation in the Environmental Assessment Act / Projet de loi 76, Loi visant à améliorer la protection de l'environnement, à accroître l'obligation de rendre des comptes et à intégrer la consultation publique à la Loi sur les évaluations environnementales.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** There will be a five-minute bell. Call in the members.

*The division bells rang from 1505 to 1510.*

**The Speaker:** We are dealing with second reading of Bill 76, standing in the name of Mrs Elliott. All those in favour will rise one at a time.

#### Ayes

Baird, John R.	Harnick, Charles	Preston, Peter
Barrett, Toby	Hastings, John	Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Bassett, Isabel	Hodgson, Chris	Ross, Lillian

Boushy, Dave	Hudak, Tim	Runciman, Robert W.
Brown, Jim	Jackson, Cameron	Sampson, Rob
Carroll, Jack	Johns, Helen	Saunderson, William
Clement, Tony	Johnson, Bert	Sheehan, Frank
Cunningham, Dianne	Johnson, David	Skarica, Toni
Danford, Harry	Johnson, Ron	Smith, Bruce
DeFaria, Carl	Jordan, W. Leo	Snobelen, John
Doyle, Ed	Kells, Morley	Spina, Joseph
Ecker, Janet	Klees, Frank	Sterling, Norman W.
Elliott, Brenda	Leach, Al	Stewart, R. Gary
Eves, Ernie L.	Marland, Margaret	Tasca, Joseph N.
Fisher, Barbara	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tilson, David
Flaherty, Jim	Maves, Bart	Tsoubouchi, David H.
Ford, Douglas B.	Munro, Julia	Turnbull, David
Fox, Gary	Mushinski, Marilyn	Vankoughnet, Bill
Froese, Tom	Newman, Dan	Villeneuve, Noble
Galt, Doug	O'Toole, John	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Gilchrist, Steve	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Wilson, Jim
Grimmett, Bill	Palladini, Al	Witmer, Elizabeth
Guzzo, Garry J.	Parker, John L.	Wood, Bob
Hardeman, Ernie	Pettit, Trevor	Young, Terence H.

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one at a time.

#### Nays

Bartolucci, Rick	Curling, Alvin	McGuinty, Dalton
Bisson, Gilles	Duncan, Dwight	Miclash, Frank
Boyd, Marion	Grandmaitre, Bernard	Morin, Gilles E.
Bradley, James J.	Gravelle, Michael	Patten, Richard
Brown, Michael A.	Hampton, Howard	Phillips, Gerry
Caplan, Elinor	Hoy, Pat	Pouliot, Gilles
Castrilli, Annamaria	Kennedy, Gerard	Pupatello, Sandra
Christopherson, David	Kormos, Peter	Ramsay, David
Churley, Marilyn	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Cleary, John C.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sergio, Mario
Colle, Mike	Lankin, Frances	Silipo, Tony
Conway, Sean G.	Laughren, Floyd	Wildman, Bud
Cooke, David S.	Marchese, Rosario	Wood, Len
Cordiano, Joseph	Martel, Shelley	
Crozier, Bruce	Martin, Tony	

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 72; the nays are 43.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader):** Mr Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent that Bill 76 should be referred to the standing committee on social development.

**The Speaker:** Agreed? Agreed.

#### PETITIONS

##### PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale):** I have a petition to the government of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ministry of Health will begin to charge seniors and social assistance recipients a \$2 user fee for each prescription filled; and



"Whereas the health care experts have asserted that user fees for drugs could jeopardize the health of individuals who cannot afford to pay for their medication; and

"Whereas Ontario's ex-psychiatric population rely heavily on prescription drugs to remain stable, and mental health care providers and the general public are scared of the outcome if these patients cannot afford to buy their medication because of the \$2 dispensing fee when it is normal policy to only prescribe them a two- to three-day supply of medication to prevent potential misuse or an overdose; and

"Whereas the perceived savings to health care from the \$2 copayment fee will not compensate for the suffering and misery caused by this user fee and will not even cover the costs of extra emergency services nor repeated hospital services. The \$2 copayment will consequently not lead to cost savings but rather increases in the case of expensive health care services; and

"Whereas the current Ontario Minister of Health, as an opposition MPP, promised Ontario pharmacists that his party would not endorse legislation that will punish patients to the detriment of health care in Ontario;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned Ontario residents, strongly urge the government of Ontario to repeal this user fee before it takes effect on July 15 because of the potential dramatic increase in emergency and police services, and the suffering and misery of human lives — especially psychiatric outpatients and those who depend on medication for their daily survival."

I've affixed my signature to this document.

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** I have a petition from approximately 50 residents of Blind River, Algoma Mills and Sudbury. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and states:

"Whereas it is vital that occupational health and safety services provided to workers be conducted by organizations in which workers have faith;

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers have provided such services on behalf of workers for many years;

"Whereas the centre and clinics have made a significant contribution to improvements in workplace health and safety and a reduction of injuries, illnesses and death caused by work;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode the structure, services or funding of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers.

"Further, we, the undersigned, demand that education and training of Ontario workers continue in its present form through the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and that professional and technical expertise and advice continue to be provided through the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers."

I'm in full agreement with this petition and I affix my signature thereto.

#### BEAR HUNTING

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** This is a petition to the Parliament of Ontario.

"Whereas bears are hunted in the spring after they have come out of hibernation; and

"Whereas about 30% of the bears killed in the spring are female, some with cubs; and

"Whereas 80% of the orphaned cubs do not survive the first year; and

"Whereas 95.3% of the bears killed by non-resident hunters and 54% killed by resident hunters are killed over bait; and

"Whereas Ontario still allows the limited use of dogs in bear hunting; and

"Whereas bears are the only large mammals hunted in the spring; and

"Whereas bears are the only mammals that are hunted over bait; and

"Whereas there are only six states in the United States which still allow a spring hunt;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to amend the Game and Fish Act to prohibit the hunting of bears in the spring and to prohibit the use of baiting and dogs in all bear-hunting activities."

1520

#### MOOSE TAGS

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** I have a petition that reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas moose hunters must be in possession of a valid moose tag to legally hunt moose during the designated hunting season in Ontario; and

"Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources holds an annual moose tag draw for all applicants to determine those hunters that are to be eligible to hunt in designated wildlife management units; and

"Whereas the livelihood of many residents of northern Ontario depends on their ability to participate in the moose hunt; and

"Whereas in 1995 there were 106,013 applicants entered in the draw and over 66,000 applicants turned away without a tag; and

"Whereas some hunters have been unsuccessful in the draw for many years in a row;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the government of Ontario through the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Natural Resources hereby revise the annual moose tag draw to automatically issue a moose tag hunting permit to individuals who have been consecutively unsuccessful in a given number of previous annual draws."

I've affixed my name to that petition as well.

#### SERVICES DE SANTÉ ET DE SÉCURITÉ AU TRAVAIL

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** I've got a petition both in English and French from the IWA



Canada, from Thunder Bay, Atikokan and other communities in the north.

Je vais lire en français la pétition que j'ai reçue adressée à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario.

"Attendu qu'il est crucial que les services de santé et de sécurité au travail à l'intention des travailleuses et des travailleurs soient fournis par des organismes auxquels les travailleuses et les travailleurs font confiance ;

"Attendu que les Centres de santé et de sécurité des travailleuses et des travailleurs, CSST, et les Centres de santé des travailleurs de l'Ontario, CSTO, assurent ces services de façon fort efficace depuis plusieurs années ;

"Attendu que le CSST et le CSTO ont fait une contribution importante aux améliorations en matière de santé et de sécurité au travail et à la réduction des blessures, des maladies et des décès liés au travail ;

"Nous, soussignés, soumettons la présente pétition à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario et l'engageons à rejeter toute initiative visant à affaiblir la structure, les services ou le financement des Centres de santé et de sécurité des travailleuses et des travailleurs ou des Centres de santé des travailleurs de l'Ontario ;

"En outre nous, soussignés, exigeons que des services d'éducation et de formation des travailleuses et des travailleurs de l'Ontario continuent à être offerts sous leur forme actuelle par les Centres de santé et de sécurité des travailleuses et des travailleurs et que des conseils professionnels et techniques continuent à être offerts par les Centres de santé des travailleurs de l'Ontario."

J'y affixe mon nom.

#### PERTH AND SMITHS FALLS DISTRICT HOSPITAL

**Mr W. Leo Jordan (Lanark-Renfrew):** I have a petition from the town of Smiths Falls. The town has a population of 10,000, and my petition has over 5,000 names on it.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the board of governors of the Perth and Smiths Falls community hospital has openly endorsed the closure of the south unit in Smiths Falls; and

"Whereas the Ministry of Health has authorized the hospital board to develop a plan to relocate patients and services from the south unit to the north unit; and

"Whereas such relocation will necessitate the construction of a multilevel addition to the existing north unit of the hospital; and

"Whereas the hospital board may close the south unit prior to the completion of the addition to the north unit; and

"Whereas such an action will force long-term hospital patients to be uprooted from the community, causing distress to them and their families;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the government of Ontario to stop the closure of the south unit and to direct the hospital board of governors to utilize renovation funds intended for the north unit addition in order to upgrade and renovate the south unit to an acceptable level."

I affix my signature.

#### NORTH YORK BRANSON HOSPITAL

**Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights):** "Whereas the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee has recommended that North York Branson Hospital merge with York-Finch hospital; and

"Whereas this recommendation will remove emergency and inpatient services currently provided by North York Branson Hospital, which will seriously jeopardize medical care and the quality of health for the growing population which the hospital serves, many being elderly people who in numerous cases require treatment for life-threatening medical conditions;

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reject the recommendation contained within the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee as it pertains to North York Branson Hospital, so that it retains, at minimum, emergency and inpatient services."

I've affixed my signature to it.

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** I've got a petition that was sent to me by CUPE Local 1263. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas it is vital that occupational health and safety services provided to workers be conducted by organizations in which workers have faith; and

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers have provided such services on behalf of workers for many years; and

"Whereas the centre and clinics have made a significant contribution to improvement in workplace health and safety and the reduction of injuries, illnesses and death caused by work,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode the structure, services or funding of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers.

"Further, we, the undersigned, demand that education and training of Ontario workers continue in its present form through the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and that professional and technical expertise and advice continue to be provided through the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers."

That's signed by Darren Simpson of Welland, by Sharon Simpson of Port Robinson, and hundreds of other people from Welland-Thorold, and I have affixed my signature in view of my strong support for this petition.

#### NON-PROFIT HOUSING

**Mr Tim Hudak (Niagara South):** I have a petition for the House today from some residents of co-op housing in Port Colborne, Crystal Beach and Fort Erie in my riding of Niagara South. Individuals like Cynthia Yates, Deb Hardemann and Shirley Clark came to my office and presented this petition. After a preamble, it says:



"We, the undersigned, request that the Ontario government sit down with the co-op housing sector to negotiate a deal which will ensure the long-term financial viability of the housing co-ops."

#### RETAIL STORE HOURS

**Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas: Opposition to retail stores opening 365 days a year,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose having retail stores remain open 365 days a year, and we strongly urge our MPP, Mr John Cleary, to voice our opposition against this legislation."

I have also signed the petition.

#### WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Further petitions? The member for London Centre. Hamilton Centre; I'm sorry.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** With all due respect to the great city of London, Speaker, I thank you for the accuracy.

I have a petition of over 3,000 signatures, in addition to the thousands I've already presented, from the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 175, which is one of the largest single local unions in all of North America, and it relates to this government's continuing attack on workers' compensation. To Premier Harris:

"We, the undersigned, oppose your government's plan to dismantle the workers' compensation system, including reducing benefits; excluding claims for repetitive strain injuries, muscle injuries, strains, sprains, stress, harassment and most occupational diseases; eliminating pension supplements; handing over control of our claims to our employers for the first four to six weeks after injury; privatizing WCB to large insurance companies; integrating sick benefits into WCB; eliminating or restricting the Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal, WCAT, including eliminating worker representation on the board and eliminating the bipartite WCB board of directors,

"Therefore we, the undersigned, demand a safe workplace, compensation if we are injured, no reduction in benefits, improved re-employment and vocational rehabilitation, an independent appeal structure with worker representation, and that WCAT be left intact and that the WCB bipartite board of directors be reinstated."

As I support these petitions, I also add my name to theirs.

#### YOUNG OFFENDERS

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth):** I have a petition from the Women's Institutes of Perth County, and this was headed up by Shirley Nowack from Rostock.

"Whereas the Young Offenders Act is under review with the Minister of Justice of Canada; and

"Whereas there is a widespread public opinion that young offenders are not being dealt with appropriately for crimes being committed and the deterrent to young offenders is not working and respect for authority and property is declining,

"Therefore, be it resolved that the Ontario Association of Police Services Boards hereby be authorized to correspond with the Minister of Justice of Canada requesting that the Young Offenders Act be revised so that upon conviction the names can be released on the second arrest after a first conviction to the public."

I agree with this resolution and I add my name to it.

1530

#### SCHOOL BOARD AMALGAMATION

**Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the final report of the Ontario School Board Reduction Task Force has been released and recommends the Kenora District Roman Catholic Separate School Board be amalgamated with the Red Lake Area Combined Separate School Board effective 1 January 1998; and

"Whereas we are of the opinion that there are no benefits for the Kenora system, its students or its ratepayers to be achieved through this amalgamation;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Kenora District Roman Catholic Separate School Board not be amalgamated with the Red Lake Area Combined Separate School Board or any other school board."

I've affixed my name to that petition as well.

#### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

##### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Mr Laughren from the standing committee on government agencies presented the Report on Agencies, Boards and Commissions, number 21, and moved the adoption of its recommendations.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** I'll make a few very brief comments. This is largely a report on the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission, and in particular norOntair, as a result of the cancellation of the air service.

The standing committee on government agencies held a hearing and invited witnesses before the committee. This outlines the comments made by people who appeared before the committee and also contains a couple of very interesting dissenting opinions from the two opposition parties. I would encourage all the government members to read in particular the dissenting opinions.

I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

##### STANDING COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

Mr Martiniuk from the standing committee on administration of justice presented the Report on the Impact of



Halfway House Closures and the Introduction of Electronic Monitoring and moved its adoption.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

**Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge):** This report, which received the unanimous support of the committee members, examines the impact of the closure of halfway houses and the introduction of electronic monitoring. The issues which the report addresses go to the heart of how we help offenders reintegrate into their communities while maintaining public safety. It is important that we accomplish these goals as efficiently and cost effectively as possible.

We were greatly assisted in our deliberations by expert witnesses from other jurisdictions that have well-established electronic monitoring programs. We also had the benefit of hearing from community-based groups and individuals who continue to be active participants in our community corrections programs.

The committee has made a number of recommendations which are forward-looking and will help guide the future of community corrections in the province.

I would like to point out that the evidence of one of the expert witnesses was obtained by videoconferencing. It is the first time that an Ontario legislative committee has used videoconferencing to obtain testimony during the course of public hearings.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank all the witnesses who shared their experience and expertise. I'd especially like to thank the clerk of our committee, Donna Bryce, for her able administration, and Susan Swift of the legislative research service for her skill in summarizing the evidence.

It was determined by the committee as an addendum that some \$10,000 a day was spent by our committee in its travels in Ontario. Because of the increase in size of the committees, the cost has gone up proportionately. That does not include the ministry staff that accompanied us. I would estimate some \$15,000 a day is spent by our committees in travelling. Our committee strongly recommended to the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly that it investigate the use of videoconferencing to either supplement or partially replace travel by committees.

I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

#### CONSIDERATION OF BILL 52

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader):** With unanimous consent, I move that the order of the House referring Bill 52 to the standing committee on resources development be discharged and that the bill be referred to the standing committee on general government, as agreed to by the whips.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Agreed? Agreed.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### CHILD ABUSE — AN APOLOGY

Mr Harnick moved government notice of motion number 7:

Whereas it is acknowledged that numerous incidents of physical and sexual abuse took place during the 1940s through 1970s at the St John's Training School in Uxbridge and the St Joseph's Training School in Alfred which were operated by the Christian Brothers of Toronto and Ottawa and funded by the government of Ontario; and

Whereas it is acknowledged that the abuse suffered by the students at these schools has caused lifelong physical and emotional pain, distress and trauma to the men themselves and to their families and community and that such abuse of children is deplorable and intolerable; and

Whereas the victims bear no responsibility for the abuse they suffered; and

Whereas child abuse is a serious social and community problem that must be addressed; and

Whereas the government supported by the Christian Brothers of Ottawa and the Catholic archdioceses of Ottawa and Toronto entered into agreements of reconciliation in 1992 and 1994 with the victims to overcome the aftermath of abuse experienced at the schools;

Therefore this House, on behalf of the people of Ontario, apologizes and expresses sincere regret for the harm caused to those in the care of St Joseph's and St John's training schools.

*Interruption.*

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Order. Remove them from the gallery. Attorney General.

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** Today, on behalf of this assembly, I rise to address an issue regarding victims of crime. Over many decades, hundreds of young people entrusted to the care of St John's and St Joseph's training schools suffered horrible abuse at the hands of those entrusted with the care and nurturing of our youngest and most vulnerable citizens.

Today we wish to bring closure to this matter for those victims. We are fulfilling an obligation made by the former government and the then Premier, Bob Rae, to those hundreds of residents of Ontario who, as children, were abused while attending St John's and St Joseph's training schools. There is no question that children committed to the care of these schools, which were directly supervised by the government and operated by the Christian Brothers, were the victims of neglect. Deplorably, many of these children were also victims of physical and sexual abuse. On behalf of the government, I have already written many personal letters to individuals expressing regret concerning these matters.

Those incidents, which took place decades ago, resulted in lasting emotional scars. The victims have suffered feelings of fear, doubt, insecurity, lack of trust, guilt and poor self-image. Some victims attempted to cope with their tragedy by engaging in self-abusive behaviour. Many of the victims are overwhelmed by the difficulties they face in their attempts to establish caring



and nurturing relationships and to participate fully in the life of our community.

I wish to express in the strongest terms on behalf of this legislature regret and condemnation for the events which took place a number of years ago. Clearly, we do not condone such deplorable actions, either then or now. Those who were harmed by such conduct were not at fault; we are here today to say that the victims are in no way responsible for the abuse they suffered. While we cannot change the past, we have endeavoured to help victims rebuild their lives and prepare for a better future. This apology I am making today comes at the conclusion of a process that was established to provide direct assistance to the victims.

1540

In Ontario in the late 1980s and early 1990s, revelations were made surrounding the conduct of staff at the St Joseph's Training School in Alfred, Ontario, and at the St John's Training School in Uxbridge, Ontario. The direct result of these revelations of abuse was the creation of a process designed to review the claims of former students and, where appropriate, to provide them with direct assistance and support to cope with the trauma they suffered.

These assistance and support programs were reflected in agreements developed jointly by the former government; the Christian Brothers who operated the St Joseph's school in Ottawa; the archdioceses of Toronto and Ottawa; and Helpline, the organization of former students. Unfortunately, the Toronto Christian Brothers chose not to take part in this healing process. The approach adopted by the former government and the other participants offered an alternative to traditional litigation, where the remedies are limited and the risks of revictimization are high.

Over the last four years, more than 500 former students at the two schools have received assistance from the government, the Christian Brothers of Ottawa and the archdioceses of Ottawa and Toronto. This process, designed by the victims themselves, has benefited a great many people. This is thanks to the courage and support of the victims.

Abuse must not be tolerated. Its prevalence is a source of shame for all of us. Those persons in whose care these children were placed were in a position of trust and broke faith both with the children and the entire community. For this, this Legislature and its elected members apologize.

Across this country, victims of abuse are demanding a voice, and they are being heard. They no longer need fear embarrassment. Victims are now being encouraged to confront their past.

As a society, we must also confront our past. Together, we can begin the often painful process of reconciliation and healing. Therefore, to fulfil former Premier Rae's obligation to these victims and to take a step towards public understanding and a confrontation of our past, I have tabled this resolution.

In closing, I want to express my recognition of the courage of those individuals who came forward, insisted on being heard and, through their perseverance, were not denied a voice. Much of the success to date is owed to them.

**Ms Annamarie Castrilli (Downsview):** This apology to the former students of St John's and St Joseph's training schools for boys, while never sufficient to make up for the injuries done them, marks nevertheless a historic day for this province. It recognizes government's, in fact society's, obligation not only to seek out cases of abuse of our children but to implement measures to prevent such abuse.

This acknowledgement that dreadful wrongs have occurred has been long awaited by the victims and their families. This all-party resolution is just one more step in the long road of recovery from events that transformed people's lives like no other event in Ontario's past, events that should never have happened.

I would like to commend the perseverance and dedication of the former students who have worked diligently in an attempt to resolve to some satisfaction — any satisfaction — outstanding issues, concerns and emotions. I would like to thank Helpline for bringing the details of this case to my attention last fall.

Although I have met many of the victims, I will never appreciate the true pain and suffering they have experienced and will continue to experience the rest of their lives. Many have already passed away without the benefit of seeing those responsible held accountable and without having heard the apologies so important to them.

For four decades, as many as 1,200 or more former wards of the two schools suffered psychological, physical and sexual abuse at the brutal hands of those responsible for their safety and wellbeing. The allegations did not surface until the summer of 1990 when victims began coming forward to tell their horrific stories. Ontario Provincial Police investigations have resulted in more than 200 charges against more than 30 people, representing the largest, most notorious child abuse scandal in Canada's history.

Helpline was subsequently established by the former students as a means of disseminating information to the victims and to provide emotional and strategic support throughout a very complex and very trying process. The most difficult thing in the world would be to face these issues, the memories, the nightmares, all alone.

The reconciliation agreement signed by Helpline, the Ottawa brothers, the archdioceses of Ottawa and Toronto, and the government of Ontario was intended to provide additional assistance to the victims in dealing with the issues while initiating a reconciliation process among the parties. Although the Toronto brothers did not sign it, it was designed to address the concerns of the related families, other affected persons and the general public regarding child abuse and public education. While many of these goals were achieved, many others remain.

Now funding for Helpline has ended, the tribunal for dealing with claims is ending, but the pain continues.

Government and indeed society must never relinquish their responsibility to pursue the eradication of violence and abuse against children. Children not only have the right to feel safe and protected, but they have the right to be safe and free from mistreatment.

The events that took place at the St John's and St Joseph's training schools were nothing short of a breach of trust of the most repugnant kind. The wellbeing and



security of those children was entrusted to the adult brothers. Instead of protection, the children received lifetimes of pain, lifetimes of torment and lifetimes lost.

We must all be conscious of the damage such abuse inflicts upon society in terms of the survivors and their families. Besides the permanent physical and psychological damage, we must also be aware that the economic cost of abuse is immeasurable. There are medical costs to help the healing and there are social assistance costs for those who are struggling with the healing process and cannot work because they have lost their self-confidence, their self-esteem and perhaps even their ability to enter into a relationship of trust. These are lifelong wounds that may never heal.

The students of St John's and St Joseph's are now receiving some compensation, counselling and even apologies. There have also been some convictions. But the real story to be told today is that of the survivors.

The long painful healing process never really begins until the truth is told. For many of these individuals the truth has been blocked from their minds for many years out of sheer horror, embarrassment and necessity. That simply reinforces the remarkable courage of these incredible people, willing to face, to relive the darkest periods of their lives.

To them I wish to say that they must remember that not one ounce of responsibility rests upon their shoulders for these terrible acts. They should live entirely free of any guilt. The guilty are those cowardly individuals who abused their positions of authority and took advantage of children incapable of defending themselves.

Now is a time for the victims to begin to rebuild their lives, with new hope for their children and for society. But society has an enormous job ahead. Child abuse is truly a social problem of the utmost seriousness that requires our urgent attention. We must promote public education of the lasting injuries abuse inflicts. We must pursue prevention and early detection strategies. When abuse does occur, we must provide rapid support for the victims and ensure abusers receive the punishment as well as the long-term help they require.

The Ministry of Community and Social Services had been leading an interministerial policy development project to review such strategies. I hope that this process is continuing, that the government is committed to it, provides adequate resources and releases a discussion paper very soon.

The issues over St John's and St Joseph's do not end with this apology. There remain some very serious concerns over the progress and speed of outstanding settlements and funding for the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board now that the tribunal is being dissolved; over the conciliation commitment to reimbursing St Joseph's Group I members from moneys collected from St John's Group I members; over the failure to make public the recorder's report that was to promote child abuse awareness and ensure lessons are learned from the past.

Now that Helpline funding is ending, there is also concern that the approximately 300 victims in Group III who have not yet received hearings will not have advocates to assist them through the process and promote their rights and opportunities.

Finally, I believe there needs to be some reflection on the whole process. Rather than being helpful to the victims, the process has been bogged down in bureaucracy, controversy and disputes. When dealing with victims, we must all take precautions, all steps to ensure that further victimization does not occur.

Please allow me on behalf of the official opposition to express to each and every victim of St John's and St Joseph's our sincerest regret and apology for the years of unimaginable pain and suffering you have experienced. I commend you for your courage, strength and determination, and pray that you are able to put these terrible experiences behind you and lead fruitful, meaningful and happy lives.

1550

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** This day has been a long time coming for many people. My colleagues are quite right to have recognized the courage and strength that has been required by those who came forward to break the silence about institutional abuse.

It's very important for us to know that it is essential for those of us who have participated in government to acknowledge that over many years people who were placed, in good faith, under the care of the government suffered as a result. Institutional abuse is similar to other forms of child abuse, but it is even more serious, because all of us are implicated when the state is responsible for a lack of care in terms of neglect or for a lack of safety and security of the person in terms of physical and sexual abuse.

It is important that all three parties in this Legislature recognize that we have all been government and that we have all had responsibility for those who are in institutional settings, and that responsibility remains today. As we speak today and acknowledge very clearly to those who suffered at St John's and St Joseph's over many years, we need to renew our commitment to ensure this kind of abuse does not occur under the institutions over which we now have authority.

One of the first groups that approached us when we came into government in 1990 was the very courageous people from Helpline, who explained to us what the process was they had gone through to that point, and their hope that there would be some way they could work with the government of the day to achieve this result without the kind of pain and suffering we all observed in the public inquiry in Newfoundland around the Mount Cashel orphanage situation.

I bring that up because I think for many of us that may have been the first real experience of seeing the pain and anguish that institutional abuse can cause, understanding how the effects of that abuse continue to magnify within someone's life until some form of reconciliation is achieved. It was untracked land. There were very few examples of any jurisdiction that had ever faced up to its own responsibility of institutional abuse and certainly no examples of how to negotiate and work out that reconciliation when so many parties were involved.

It is particularly important for us to acknowledge that as a result of the abuse and neglect that the survivors of St John's and St Joseph's had faced, there was a very great difficulty for them to trust that people were sincere



in trying to come to that solution. So they are to be all the more admired for the efforts they have made to trust one another in the process of coming to communal decisions about what needed to be done in attempting to trust government officials, in attempting to trust the brothers and the archdiocese as well.

It is a great tribute to their courage and their strength and their commitment that they have managed to reach this plateau in reconciliation. My colleagues are right to say that an apology does not necessarily take away all the pain. We all are aware that it doesn't. But what it does do is to make it clear that we are responsible, that our government here in Ontario is responsible for what happened to those people and that when we come upon situations where this has also occurred, as we did with the provincial schools for the deaf and the blind, as we know we are facing with the Grandview situation — and we have no idea how many other situations — we continue to have the courage to acknowledge our responsibility and to do what we can to redress the damage that has been done, and of course, we must dedicate ourselves to make sure that we are setting up systems and policies and procedures to ensure that this kind of damage doesn't occur in the future.

I'm going to read from the reconciliation statement, the homily that was done by the two archdioceses, because I think these words are important for us to hear here. The two archbishops said:

"Every institution in society that is involved in the care of children or that comes into contact with them now carries the knowledge of the evil of child abuse. It must be prevented and remedied; first, by ensuring that those with a tendency to abuse are kept out of contact with children; second, by ensuring that there is vigilance in detecting and dealing with cases of child abuse; third, by responding quickly and compassionately to victims, administering to their physical, psychological and spiritual needs; fourth, by ensuring that abusers experience firm justice accompanied by treatment, so that they will not abuse again.

"All people of goodwill are called upon to do what can be done to protect the most defenceless and vulnerable in our society. We know that whenever child abuse is dealt with openly and honestly, healing is possible."

That is what we have attempted to do through the process of reconciliation, to deal openly and honestly with the pain and the reality of abuse. I think, as we extend our very deepest and most sincere regret to those who were at St John's and St Joseph's, who experienced this kind of abuse, we tell them very clearly that we dedicate ourselves to ensure that this kind of abuse does not continue in our province.

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** I want to just take a moment to speak to this this afternoon and to commend the Attorney General for his excellent remarks and certainly to agree with my colleague from Downsview and the former Attorney General who has just spoken, the member for London Centre.

It is an important thing we do this afternoon. I grew up in a little town where Alfred was synonymous with some kind of Alcatraz. As it happened, I was lucky because of course my parents were the kind of people who were in

a position where they could look after their children. But on more days than I can remember, in the elementary school, the very Catholic elementary school to which I was sent, I can remember the days we were told, "Be bad and you'll go to Alfred."

I remember when I was perhaps 16 or 17, when I first went to Alfred. Boy, I finally met the physical geography of the place that had been raised as a spectre of where bad people went. I know nothing of St John's, but I'll tell you it is a day of atonement. The Attorney General said it well. As a Catholic I've got to tell you this is a deep valley of humiliation, but I thought the member for London Centre appropriately reflected on the words of the various archbishops. Part of my emotion today I think is that you just knew that some very important people way back when knew, and for whatever reason were incapable of acting, and it was a different time.

1600

Last night as I drove down from my part of eastern Ontario, the radio service of the national broadcasting corporation had a program called Connections, which was the story of something called The Magdalen Laundry. I don't know whether anybody heard it. The member for St Andrew-St Patrick nods in the affirmative — just an incredible story about a situation in Ireland that, given what we've heard about St John's and St Joseph's, Alfred sounded to me altogether believable.

I have good friends at Kingston whose children were abused in the tragedy that is the St George's boys' choir scandal. Do you know the interesting thing about Alfred? When I look back on it now, I think: "Those poor people. They had no advocates." In the main if you were sent to Alfred, there wasn't going to be a Sean Conway or an Isabel Bassett or a Margaret Marland or a Frances Lankin to stand and speak for you. You were almost certainly somebody in trouble, somebody from what we then called a broken family, someone with no advocates, so who was going to believe you?

Many of these horrific cases of abuse occurred back in the 1950s and 1960s. The St George's scandal occurred in the 1970s and 1980s, in the main with the upper-middle class of a very prominent Canadian community, Kingston. I cite the St George's case because there are days when I think about Alfred and about those kids with no advocates in the 1950s and the 1960s and then I think about the story of St George's in the 1970s and the 1980s, the sons of professors and lawyers and business people, and I say this is both upstairs and downstairs. Apparently these horrific cases of abuse are not restricted to one class alone.

I'm a proud son of eastern Ontario. There's the story of Prescott, Operation Jericho. There's not a more attractive community in Ontario than Prescott. I don't know how many of you are familiar with what went on at Prescott back in the 1960s and 1970s: just an unbelievable story of abuse of children. It's the sort of thing you'd expect to see on Sunday night television, 60 Minutes in some part of Alabama, but it didn't happen in Alabama; it happened in Prescott, in Alfred and at St George's in Kingston, to name but three in my part of eastern Ontario.



It happened in the main on someone else's watch, and that's why I commend the Attorney General and his predecessor, the member for London Centre, for doing what they have done today, supported by my colleague from Downsview. This did not happen on our watch, and we are properly standing in our place today and offering this act of contrition. It will never repair the damage that was done. Yes, hope springs eternal but it can never repair the damage that's been done. It is no wonder and little surprise that people would come here today to vent their spleen about what was done to them and their lives.

As I take my seat there are two final reflections I will make. Let us hope, let us pray, let us dedicate ourselves that no such horror occurs on our watch and let us individually and collectively rededicate ourselves as a legislative community to try to improve the safeguards for those people who are in the care of others, including the custodial care of governments local, provincial and national.

I say as someone who has no children yet, let us try also to rededicate ourselves to see if we can find out what is in the human psyche that creates this savage attack on defenceless young people, and perhaps even more importantly, what is in the collective humanity that so often, in the face of very alarming evidence that something is seriously wrong, none the less there is an individual and a collective tolerance or inaction that allows this criminal conduct and this awful abuse to continue under our very noses.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Mr Harnick has moved government notice of motion number 7. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** Mr Speaker, I wonder if we may, at the request of many who have joined us in the Legislature today, observe a moment of silence.

**The Acting Speaker:** Do we have agreement? Yes.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

#### ALCOHOL, GAMING AND CHARITY FUNDING PUBLIC INTEREST ACT, 1996

#### LOI DE 1996 RÉGISSANT LES ALCOOLS, LES JEUX ET LE FINANCEMENT DES ORGANISMES DE BIENFAISANCE DANS L'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 75, An Act to regulate alcohol and gaming in the public interest, to fund charities through the responsible management of video lotteries and to amend certain statutes related to liquor and gaming / *Projet de loi 75, Loi réglementant les alcools et les jeux dans l'intérêt public, prévoyant le financement des organismes de bienfaisance grâce à la gestion responsable des loteries vidéo et modifiant des lois en ce qui a trait aux alcools et aux jeux.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** The member for Yorkview, I believe you were the last one to debate.

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** Having heard the last four speakers, the only thing I can add is one word:

amen. It's very difficult to pick up the discussion on VLTs or the so-called slot machines after the presentations of the last four speakers.

I wish to continue my presentation, which I cut off at midnight last night, and continue the discussion on the government Bill 75, an act to regulate alcohol and gaming in the public interest. I don't want to attack or be seen as attacking the government in vain, but I find it quite inappropriate to say this is in the public interest. I dare say that this is the total opposite.

It was on May 16, 1995, when our Premier, just before an election, said there will be no VLTs "until all sectors have been consulted" — we have had no consultation — "until there is an impact assessment," and we have had no impact assessment and no agreement on the sharing of the funds.

1610

Really, what is the reason? What is the reason for introducing gambling casinos, if you will, mini-casinos, in every corner store in our province? Very soon they're going to be in every barbershop and every flower shop, wherever people can make a buck. It is coming exactly to that. It is false to assume that once this legislation is in place, this will be restricted solely to racetracks or nightclubs or places where there is a liquor licence. The government evidently is doing this for no other reason but to make money — big money.

Is it because there is a demand from the public? Absolutely not. We have not tested, we have not requested an answer from the public; therefore, there is no such demand.

Is it because there is something good for the people of Ontario with the introduction of slot machines at every corner store in Ontario? There is absolutely nothing good in this legislation for the people of Ontario.

Is it because this legislation will create jobs? Absolutely not. Indeed it takes away jobs from people in Ontario, and that is one thing the government fails to concentrate on: the creation of jobs, especially at this time when so many students are out looking for summer jobs.

Would the introduction of VLTs or slot machines help reduce crime? Absolutely not. I think this is going to be devastating for every local community in Ontario with respect to petty crimes, break-ins, purse snatching, vandalism and whatever else.

The only thing I can think of — there are two reasons. One I would find right in the government's document, the budget that was presented to us on May 7, 1996. It is just a quote, not very much. It's buried on page 25 of the budget presentation, on the introduction of VLTs and creating jobs. It says, "To assist Ontario's hospitality industry, the Ontario Lottery Corp will develop a plan to introduce a limited number of video lottery terminals (VLTs) at selected locations across the province."

I'd like to ask the minister responsible for the introduction of this legislation and I'd like to ask every member of the House, especially those on the government side, how in the name of God the introduction of VLTs is going to help the hospitality industry here in Ontario. Are we saying to our cousins south of the border or the people coming from other parts of Ontario who move around within the province, "Come to Ontario and play



the VLTs, the slot machines"? Is this the impression we want to give of Ontario? Is this the way we want to promote tourism in Ontario? Is this the way we want to promote the hospitality industry in Ontario? Is this the way we want to create jobs in Ontario? Certainly not.

It's right in here, in the government's document: This is to help the hospitality industry. It is the most absurd thing I have read in the entire document and the most absurd thing to come out from the government side, that we have to introduce slot machines to help the Ontario hospitality industry.

The real truth is another: It is that the government was duly elected by the people of Ontario. They have made a number of promises. The introduction of VLTs in Ontario was not one of those promises.

But lo and behold, what happens? They took power; they made some very, very unusual, if you will, promises; and now they find it very, very hard to deliver on some of them — as a matter of fact, impossible to deliver on some of them, because the only one that I can think of that is causing this tremendous rash of actions on behalf of the government to go to the people of Ontario and say, "Come and spend your last few dollars gambling," is that they need to compensate for the tax cut that they had proposed to give to the rich people in Ontario.

What I find most disturbing is this: First we implement the tax cuts, then we give most of it to the well-to-do people, and then we go to the poor people again and say, "Come and play; shell out your last few dollars, because now we need to pay hardly the interest on the money which we have to borrow which we had promised to give back to the rich people," which is the 30%. This is the most obnoxious thing, and I feel very compelled to bring it forth.

It's not a question of installing VLTs or slaughter machines or slot machines as a type of amusement; it is solely to make more money for the government to pay for their debts. Their own budget says that they have to borrow some \$20 billion.

What's strange is that Mr Harris during the election said that he was morally troubled to take money from the Windsor Casino, and he threatened to close it. On May 3, 1995, he said on gambling revenues: "I don't want the Ontario government to have it. I don't want the money. I don't want a million dollars a day in the province of Ontario."

Part of the problem is that the province of Ontario, as he was saying then, has too much money, the province wants too much money, and the province spends too much money. Then he says, "Well, the province borrows too much money." So why the heck do you go and borrow an extra \$20 billion to give it to the rich and then you go and devastate every community, every neighbourhood with the importation, if you will, of VLTs, slot machines everywhere, wherever you can make a buck?

What has changed to force the government to come out now and introduce VLTs in Toronto? I dare say that this is an anomaly to call it this particular way. I think it should be called, this is the newest, forced-upon, unwanted, lottery user fee form introduced by the government to date. It is nothing more, nothing less. It's exactly

another lottery form of user fee which is being imposed, if you will, on the people of Ontario.

When we do some actions and we force an action on the local government, I think we should give the local government an opportunity to say, "Yes, it is good for our people and we'll take it; we will adopt it," or "No, we don't." I would suggest that the local municipalities will be feeling, perhaps more than any other level of government, the effect of this legislation. I think we should consult with the local municipalities and let them decide if they wish to have VLTs or slot machines in every neighbourhood in their municipalities.

What's so strange is this: that we've had no consultation, we have had no studies, yet the government is willing to move ahead without taking into consideration even some of the studies — and their results, I should say — from other provinces in Canada; for example, Nova Scotia. Very recently, they have eliminated two thirds of their slot machines. They have removed from the market two thirds of their slot machines, and do you know what? British Columbia very recently has an entire ban on the installation and proliferation of slot machines. Our government, before they move ahead, before they move on, should take that into consideration.

1620

What is the effect? What is the impact, the negative impact, I should say, that the slot machines will have in our social lives? How would you feel, especially if you are a single parent and you want to send your 12-year-old to buy a jug of milk and that little kid there is going to have the temptation to say, "Oh, well, I'm just going to put \$1 or \$2," or whatever, and he's going to blow the money? Is this what we want to do to our people in Ontario?

With all due respect, last night the member for Etobicoke West said that if he were to propose to his constituents in the way of a referendum, that probably his constituents would vote against, and I'm saying that it's very nice, very good, very wise. I would say that given the opportunity, the people in my area, in my riding, would vote against the installation and proliferation of video lottery terminals or slot machines, and I would encourage every member of the House, the government side, that this is not the way to go.

I would say, give the people in your riding, give the people of Ontario, a chance to decide for themselves if they want video lottery terminals, slot machines, in their communities. Then and only then would you have a good idea if this is something good that we should proceed with or something that we should really do without at the present time. As it is at the moment, I find it very difficult to support this particular bill at this time.

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** I'll only take a few minutes on this — at least I plan to only take a few minutes — in that this does fall within my critic's role, and I didn't have the opportunity to open debate last night, so I would like to have just a few minutes today.

As may have been mentioned but I think deserves some quick repetition, of course this bill on the surface says that they're going to merge the Liquor Licence Board of Ontario with the Ontario Gaming Control Commission and form a new Alcohol and Gaming



Commission of Ontario, and the new agency, it tells us, will also take over the regulatory functions currently being carried on by the LCBO.

As well, I think it was mentioned that it will prohibit those under 19 from playing slot machines and from being in areas where slot machines are located. That's one of the points that I'd like to make. It wasn't so long ago that we found it necessary, and I think a prudent move, to take away altogether cigarette sales in machines, because notwithstanding the fact that it had a "restricted" sticker on it, that you couldn't use the machine if you were under the age of 19, notwithstanding the fact that it was in areas that were supposed to be not accessible to those under the age of 19, obviously it was a problem.

To merely say in the legislation that you're simply going to prohibit those under 19 from playing the slot machines and from being in areas where slot machines are located isn't worth the paper it's written on.

I've had an example given to me from another province where slot machines are in a different area. The problem in this particular instance is that the bar is located outside the slot machine area. The bartender is busy on this particular occasion — and I suggest many others, because it's observed as being a normal routine — serving the patrons at the bar; the waiters and waitresses, the servers, are busy taking care of the patrons in the bar area. It was observed by this person that nobody was paying any attention to who was playing the slot machines in the other room. In other words, if you don't have somebody there full-time monitoring the machines, I have no idea how you could possibly control who plays them.

It also brings to us the suggestion that you not only have to have somebody to control them all the time, but we also want to control illegal slot machines. We're told, again by the government, that these illegal slot machines in the province of Ontario are a problem and that to control the illegal machines it's very simple — we just legalize them all.

I suggest to you and to others that those who operate illegal slot machines now are probably the type of business, if it's carried on in a bar, that if they applied for a licence very likely might not get one because they're someone who now flouts the law. What would prevent them from flouting the law further? Why should they be more concerned about the law today than yesterday if they operate illegally? If they have illegal slot machines now, I suggest that their liquor licence could be taken away from them. What kind of a threat is it to them if they continue to operate that way?

I doubt very much illegal slot machines are going to be controlled by making them legal. We are told that Detective Staff Sergeant Larry Moodie of the OPP's illegal gaming division believes that just because the government legalizes slot machines, the illegal slots won't disappear. There's too much profit in it.

That's another point I'd like to make. If I'm operating an illegal slot machine today, or an a number of them in a business, why would I be so generous as to start operating legally and share with the government 100% of the profit that I've been making in the past? That doesn't make sense either. If I'm the type of person who wants

to take that kind of risk, and I have taken it in the past, why wouldn't I simply continue in the future, only I'll continue to keep 100% of the profits? Why should I share them with the government? It just doesn't make a great deal of sense to me. I agree with Sergeant Moodie, who is no doubt more of an expert in this area than most of us in this province, that the estimated 15,000 illegal terminals currently in existence won't disappear because there's too much profit in them.

I suggest that this is what's going to drive our problem even with legalized machines and restrictions on the 19 years of age and under — the profit. I suggest that with less, or no more enforcement — and that's the way to eliminate the illegal machines now — with no additional enforcement, why wouldn't someone who operates a bar, who doesn't have much of a risk of anyone inspecting them, enforcing it, why wouldn't they allow minors, in this case those under the age of 19, to operate those slots?

1630

Speaker, it truly mystifies me; I simply can't understand. I think you know this, I think the backbenchers know this, I think the government itself knows what I would like to point out, but I'm not so sure that the people of Ontario who may be watching this understand, can help me on this. I'm quoting from the now Premier in the 1995 election, only a year ago:

"I don't want the Ontario government to have it. I don't want the money. I don't want a million dollars a day into the province of Ontario. Part of the problem is the Ontario government has too much money, wants too much money, borrows too much money, spends too much money."

These were the words of the now Premier of the province when it came to gambling. On May 16, 1995, in a letter to John Charmers, chairman of the Charitable Gaming Alliance, Mike Harris promised, "A Harris government will not move on VLTs until all sectors have been consulted, all impacts are assessed and an agreement is reached on the distribution of revenues."

When we talk about the government having too much money, this government certainly has moved to reduce its spending. When the now Premier says the government spends too much money, they're certainly making a move to reduce the amount they spend. They've cut social services. They've cut education. They've cut police protection. They've cut agriculture. They've reduced spending in every area, and in some areas a great deal more than we think they should or need to do.

When it comes to having too much money, they've even made a further move that will reduce the amount of money the Ontario government has: They're giving a tax cut to the rich in this province. Most of it is going to fewer than 10% of the population. They're borrowing \$5 billion a year to do that. They're running the deficit up from \$100 billion to \$122 billion. They're going to borrow four times as much as they have on occasion accused us of having borrowed in our term of office. They're certainly making sure they have less money because they're cutting spending on one hand and they're cutting their revenue on the other hand.



When the Premier said, "I don't want a million dollars a day into the province," I suggest he might have been referring to the \$1-million-a-day profit that Casino Windsor makes. He was going to close Casino Windsor, but certainly when his handlers got to him, probably on the bus shortly after that, the tune changed the next day.

I can't understand why Mr Harris would make those statements last year and now says:

"We want to control it first, and if there's some revenue that flows from it to the province of Ontario then so be it.

"I think we didn't know all the answers...so we are evolving with our policies there.

"In the whole gambling area, we are still analysing and studying and finding our way."

I certainly agree with the now Premier, Mr Harris. They don't know all the answers; that's for sure.

When he said, "If there is some revenue that flows from it to the province of Ontario then so be it," isn't that very generous? I guess what the Premier is saying is: "Yes, we'll control these illegal gambling devices. Then we'll put another 20,000 of them out in the province, and if some money flows from it, then so be it."

Let me suggest what has really happened. The rapidity with which this has happened and the lack of consultation with which it's happened and the lack of planning with which it's happened is, that a few days, maybe weeks, before the budget the finance people came in and said:

"Mr Premier, Mr Treasurer, we've got this all figured out for you now. We know where you want to cut. We know where you want to put your tax cut. We know how much money you want to give back to the richest in the province. But Mr Premier, Mr Treasurer, you've got a problem: You don't have enough money. We can't do it. We've got to find more revenue."

We've heard the now Premier and Treasurer over the last few years in this Legislature virtually rail against gambling in this province. And what do they do as a solution? They go to the most addictive form of gambling we have.

I certainly won't go through them, but I have here all kinds of information, and not one bit of this, not one item in here, says slot machines are good. It all says slot machines are bad, slot machines are addictive, slot machines get hold of you and won't let go. But I have to admit, in all of this that says slot machines are no good, I do have one that says slot machines are good.

I'll read a bit about what Mr Pollock has said. Now, we have to remember that Mr Pollock is a little upset these days because he and those who work with him thought they were going to be able to put all these slot machines in in the province; they were going to put one in every backyard. Well, the government euchred them: They're not involved in this. In any event, "Mr Pollock sees video gambling as essentially another social activity, an entertainment opportunity, he says, and a stimulation for the hospitality industry." Well, it very well might be a stimulation for the hospitality industry. We know that strategically located and controlled casinos are good for the hospitality industry and do bring tourist dollars into the province, but I don't know whether a slot machine in

a local bar in some rural community is going to do a darn thing for the tourist industry.

Mr Pollock, in this article, is supposed to have suggested: "There are a few people who can't handling gambling, just as some can't handle eating or drinking. So the industry should try to help out those who overindulge and let the others get on with their fun." The crack cocaine of gambling, video slot machines, are not just "fun." If they were just fun, why would we have to put money into them to play? Why don't we just play it like any other video game that we play at home? No, sir. People look to video gambling machines, slot machines, as a way to bring in their lucky boat, and I think that's the problem with them.

Mr Pollock is quoted as saying: "I don't think society's role is to tell people how to spend their money. I think gambling is certainly better for you than smoking. And I don't know about the drinking. I don't have any difficulty with people playing on a modest basis." Neither do I, but statistically, everybody who is any kind of authority on this tells us that it isn't simply people playing on a modest basis. Maybe the majority of people can, I don't know. But it's those who can't that we should be concerned about.

We are told that last year in the province of Manitoba more money was spent on gambling than on the grocery industry. More money was spent gambling in Manitoba than to feed families. What is it in Ontario? We're not being told by the minister. What's his plan for gambling in Ontario? We don't know that there is any great plan for the introduction of gambling in Ontario. All we suspect is that they need the revenue, so they've gone out and — but I am willing, in my role as critic, to listen to those in the racetrack business. They're controlled areas. I'm willing to listen to the people who operate controlled casinos. But they're going way beyond that. This is the slippery slope that everybody is concerned about. We're going to open up casinos all over this province.

1640

The Premier solemnly said, and I have no idea whether he's going to carry out this promise, "We won't introduce a casino in the province of Ontario until after we've had a referendum." Now we're going to open up 50 permanent charity casinos in the province — no referendum. We're going to put slot machines in every corner bar, but no referendum.

I don't think they have a plan, I don't think they have any plan at all. For someone to so naively say to us, "I don't have any difficulty with people playing on a modest basis" — I frankly don't think Mr Pollock was talking from arm's length or with an objective view.

"Dr Howard Schaffer of Harvard Medical School, an acknowledged expert on gambling, disputes Mr Pollock's contention that the legalization of video gambling would attract mainly those who now gamble illegally.

"Not only would there be a substantial increase in all gambling, he says, but many would probably turn to illegal gambling eventually because the payoffs are higher."

The profits are better for those who operate them. The government doesn't share in it. We have people who don't even want to pay provincial sales tax, for goodness'



sake. Why would they want to share their gambling profits with the government? I can't believe it, and I can't believe that somebody would think we're so naïve as to think that's the case. "Not only would there be a substantial increase in all gambling, but many would probably turn to illegal gambling" — an expert in the field.

As I said at the outset, there has been a lot said about this. I feel rather frustrated. Notwithstanding the fact that in our democratic place we have the opportunity to debate the issue, I'm surprised that there haven't been some government members, some backbenchers, who have gotten up to speak about this. I suggest they're told they can't get up to speak about it.

The parts of Ontario that we all come from are not always so different just because they elected a Conservative member, a Liberal member or a New Democratic member. The people of Ontario have an awful lot of similarities. For those on the government side not to have heard some of the same concerns we have, or on the other hand, to stand in their place and tell us how beneficial gambling is, how great it is, how the experts say it's no problem — we haven't heard that from them.

I like to hear the other side, I like to hear both sides of an issue, but we're not getting both sides of the issue. There's only one side, as far as the government's concerned, and that's revenue, and there's only one side as far as we're concerned, and that is that it's one of the worst types of gambling they could possibly get involved in. Without consulting the people of the province, they're simply going to march ahead and spread it across the province because they need the bucks and they don't care about those who are hurt in the process.

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** I am very pleased to be able to rise in my place today and say a few things about the proliferation of VLTs and slot machines, if that's what's you want to call them, throughout the province.

This is an issue I really have some difficulty with, because in general I don't like paternalistic government and I don't like politicians telling people what they can and can't do. Those who are activists in that sort of movement are called social engineers. They believe that experts and government know what's right for people and want to design legislation in order to control people's behaviour and direct what people do in society. But obviously, there come, from time to time, issues that government feels are very important to control.

We do, for instance, control the consumption of alcohol in this country. Most jurisdictions in the world have some sort of government control of alcohol. It's readily available, but we tax it and we control the sale of it, primarily because most people in society believe that the moderate consumption of alcohol is a socially acceptable behaviour. We do believe, though, that it's much better that this only be consumed by adults and not by young people, and therefore we put in certain rules about how one can access alcohol, how it is served in the public and how we sell it for home consumption.

We do this also with tobacco, and even though I've never been a tobacco smoker, I sometimes feel that maybe governments are overzealous in the control of tobacco, but I understand how pernicious it is and how

pervasive it is when people are addicted to tobacco and I think the vast majority of people would accept the health damage that the steady consumption of tobacco causes. So therefore, we regulate it, but sometimes I feel that maybe we overregulate these things and go too far.

With gambling, it's the same sort of area. Again, it's not an activity that I personally enjoy, though from time to time, on a vacation or something when there has been a casino nearby, I've been curious and I'd say to my wife, "Let's take \$20 and go to the slot machine and try that out." I've certainly done that and it's kind of fun. I can lose my \$20, because that's usually what happens, but I can walk away from it and go do something else.

The government in Ontario is in the gambling business. We, over the years, have sold lottery tickets and it is a very popular activity in Ontario. The proceeds go to very good causes in Ontario. Originally, the Wintario system was set up primarily to build arenas and support other recreational activity in the province, and then it was expanded, actually through the Liberal government, that these revenues could go towards health care and other government activities. So there is a big pot of money that is accessible by the government from our gambling revenues.

Then the NDP government came along and again the pressure for more revenues increased and the previous government decided to establish a casino in Windsor. This also came from a particular pressure from the city of Windsor as it, at that time, in the late 1980s, was feeling tremendous economic pain from the downsizing of the automobile industry. Windsor, while today it has a very buoyant economy again, is very much dependent on the automobile industry, and one could say actually before the casino it was almost a single-industry town with sub-industries that were needed and required and that prospered to support the automobile industry.

So a casino was established. We in our caucus discussed that, and even those of us who don't really agree with the proliferation of gambling in the province saw that as a local issue, and that if Windsor felt it needed a casino and if the province of Ontario was going to benefit, so be it; let Windsor establish that.

On one of my trips to Windsor, I have gone into that casino. What was interesting to me about it and why I agree more with the Windsor casino and some other ones that I'll talk about in a minute is that by being placed on the border of this province with the United States, in this case the state of Michigan, it appeared to me, and my colleagues have backed it up factually, that 85% of the clients of the Windsor casino are Americans. Having a casino on a border city is a tremendous benefit for Ontario, for Windsor, but also for all the taxpayers of Ontario, because those are new American dollars that are coming into the Ontario economy from the United States that are very beneficial to our tourism and to our health care and other services that the Ontario government provides.

I agree with this government's announcement that Niagara Falls should also see a casino, and in fact it would seem to me that Toronto, being the world-class tourism centre that it is, would also be a logical place for a casino.



1650

You may want to also consider some day, if the people of Ottawa wish to have one now that the city of Hull, Quebec has a casino established, that Ottawa, if it does consider the need to have a casino there, obviously that should be considered by the government also.

What is interesting about the gambling activities that happen within the walls of a casino is that they are tightly controlled. The previous government embarked upon a system of tendering and scrutinizing organizations that would operate and run these casinos in order to attempt — and I believe they've been successful with that — to keep out unsavoury elements from this business.

As in other jurisdictions around the world, it has been unfortunately the history that, let's say, unsavoury elements have taken control from time to time of the industry, and it also has attracted other sorts of unsavoury elements around that that are not necessarily welcome in communities and neighbourhoods. But in a casino, the activity is controlled. There is an age restriction at a casino and so video lotteries or slot machines are a legitimate part of a casino.

What really concerns me about this government's bill here today is that we would see the proliferation of slot machines beyond casinos. Having taken trips across the United States and driven through the state of Nevada, as soon as you cross the border, of course, whether it be the state line on the west side coming from California or from the east, as soon as you hit the first variety store or gas station you are confronted with a slot machine. They are everywhere in that state. Whether it be a drugstore, the bus terminal, gas stations, 7 Elevens, they are everywhere.

While that is interesting — and one of the reasons I like to travel is to see how different people live, different cultures, the way different jurisdictions work; it's always interesting to see these new things — I'm not quite sure I would like to see Ontario — as a matter of fact, I know I'm quite sure that I would not like to see Ontario become Nevada north.

While we have some highly restricted gambling activities occurring in casinos, and as I've said before, I wouldn't mind seeing a few more casinos — and maybe Sault Ste Marie, if it wanted one, should have one also so that it can combat the casino gambling that is going on across the border in Sault, Michigan — I really don't want to see the proliferation of slot machines in every bar and then possibly in every restaurant and, going beyond that, into every sort of public place in Ontario. It's just not the Ontario that I wish to see.

These machines would be accessible basically on a daily basis. You could come Friday with your paycheque to the local tavern, have a few beers on your way home and get mesmerized by this wonderful electronic display that these machines have, and maybe now, after having a few beers, just keep plugging the loonies and the toonies into this machine and maybe — and in some cases we know this through scientific study — there might not be that much of that paycheque left for some of those people.

I think we should have a gambling opportunity for those who want to gamble. You could have a trip and you come to Toronto or to one of the casinos or go to some of the charity casinos that we have in our various towns to raise money locally. But to have on a day-in-and-day-out basis these slot machines in every sort of venue in all our small towns I think just changes the whole culture of Ontario. It changes the way we look at the work ethic: how we earn our money, how we save our money and how we spend our money.

To have such easy access there — I know, and scientific studies will back me up, there are 3% to 5% of the people in the population who just cannot resist the lure of these machines. I worry about those people, I worry about their families, I worry about the social cost of all of that and I worry about the cost to the health care system in order to provide those people with the counselling that they are going to be requiring.

We have an example in this country in the province of Nova Scotia where they moved on to a proliferation of slot machines throughout the province and they have retreated somewhat because they found that some individuals and many families got into trouble. As my colleague previously has said to this House, in the province of Manitoba more money is spent on gambling than to buy groceries for the families of that province.

I think the government should take a second look at this. I support the government in establishing the Niagara Falls casino and I would work with the communities in the province that would like to see more casinos, especially in border city locations. I think that would be a smart strategic investment in our tourism industry. It would bring Americans from the border states that don't have casino gambling into Ontario, and I think we could all be winners. But it would be wrong to see a proliferation of VLTs and slot machines throughout Ontario. That's why, when the bill comes up for a vote, I will be voting against it.

**Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott and Russell):** I will speak against Bill 75. I am really worried about this Bill 75 and what it will do, especially to students, whenever we install those legalized so-called video poker machines in bars and restaurants near schools.

It's been known in the past that wherever there's a chance for a student to win money, to gain money —

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** To lose money.

**Mr Lalonde:** — to lose money — you could call it loose money — they are always taking a chance to gain money, to win a jackpot. It takes only one student to go to a restaurant near a high school. If that student will take his meal money, put it in the machine, and all of a sudden does make a gain, it will attract the rest of the school kids, who will go and spend their money.

Je suis vraiment concerné et inquiet du fait que nous allons permettre les appareils vidéo dans des bars et restaurants. Je crois que même si nous mentionnons dans le projet de loi que, «Les personnes responsables de locaux où se trouvent des appareils de loterie vidéo, de même que les personnes agissant pour leur compte, ne doivent : (a) ni permettre aux personnes de moins de 19 ans d'avoir accès à la section d'un lieu réservé au jeu où se trouvent des appareils de loterie vidéo; (b) ni permettre



aux personnes de moins de 19 ans de jouer à une loterie vidéo», actuellement nous avons au-delà de 15 000 machines qui existent illégalement dans la province. À aucun temps, nous n'avons pu mettre en place le personnel pour aller superviser ou exclure ces morceaux d'équipements qui existent dans nos restaurants.

Je connais des personnes qui ont perdu leur maison, qui ont brisé des familles, qui ont tout perdu. Nous devenons des personnes adonnées à ces machines. Aujourd'hui nous allons permettre ces machines dans les bars et restaurants. J'ai peur de ça. Je visite les casinos de temps à autre, et nous nous apercevons de plus en plus que les personnes qui fréquentent ces endroits sont surtout dans le besoin. Lorsque je dis qu'ils sont dans le besoin, nous n'avons qu'à aller faire un tour au casino de Hull. Vous allez voir à la fin du mois que le casino est rempli à la capacité. Nous aurons des lignes d'attente de 30 minutes à la porte cette fin de semaine qui vient. Pourquoi ? C'est la semaine où nous allons distribuer les chèques de bien-être social. Ce sont eux qui vont être affectés.

Je reconnais que 10 % des revenus va vers les oeuvres de charité. Combien allons-nous perdre dans les «bingos» qui sont organisés par les clubs de service, qui sont organisés par des groupes de charité ? C'est déjà reconnu dans la région de Hull-Ottawa. Nous perdons beaucoup d'argent, de revenus dans le moment puisque les gens se rendent aux casinos en fin de semaine surtout, mais sept jours par semaine avec la venue de ces machines à loterie dans les bars et les restaurants. Cela vaudrait la fermeture de beaucoup de «bingos» qui existent, surtout dans le secteur rural.

C'est vraiment inquiétant lorsque nous regardons que le gouvernement va se baser — on nous dit qu'ils vont installer 20 000 machines à travers l'Ontario. On nous dit que nous allons avoir le nombre le plus bas par capita de toutes les provinces du Canada, mais jamais je n'ai entendu dire que dans la Nouvelle-Écosse on a décidé de retirer au-delà de 75 % des équipements qui ont été installés depuis quelques années. Pourquoi ? Nous avons reconnu que ces machines sont un danger.

**1700**

J'ai dit tout à l'heure que 10 % des revenus ira vers les oeuvres de charité ; 10 % ira vers le revenu pour les opérateurs ou propriétaires d'établissements. Nous avons reconnu que 2 % devrait être mis de côté pour aider au traitement des personnes qui deviendront «addictées» à ce problème, mais je crois que ce n'est pas là. Nous aurions dû entreprendre une étude approfondie et nous aurions certainement reconnu qu'il y a un très grand danger vers l'installation de ces équipements dans nos entreprises.

J'ai entendu le ministre nous dire hier que les gains seront de 85 % à 90 % du montant d'argent que nous allons insérer dans ces machines. Je crois que nous avons fait une erreur, puisque si nous allons à Las Vegas, si nous allons à Atlantic City, très rares sont les casinos qui vont publier ou annoncer que vous avez la chance de remporter 85 % des sous que vous allez insérer dans ces machines.

Nous aurions peut-être dû procéder avec un référendum, surtout après le référendum que nous avons tenu dans la ville d'Oshawa où le tout a été rejeté par une proportion de plus de 60 %.

Aujourd'hui la province de l'Ontario dit, «Il faut aller chercher des argents pour combler le déficit.» Je crois que ce n'est pas là qu'est la raison-d'être d'installer ces machines qui, je tiens toujours à dire, sont des machines illégales puisque nous allons installer ces machines-là pour retirer l'argent des pauvres, surtout.

Je crois que si nous procédions, avant de passer en troisième lecture, à un référendum à travers la province, après des études de toutes les autres provinces du pays, certainement le public se prononcerait à environ 65 % à 70 % contre l'installation de ces machines dans les bars et restaurants.

Je ne dis pas que j'irais au point de dire que je suis contre l'installation de ces machines dans les endroits où nous avons des courses de chevaux, des courses de chiens. C'est seulement en Floride dans le moment ; ce n'est pas arrivé au Canada ou en Ontario. Dans les endroits comme le «racetrack», qu'on appelle ça en anglais, je le verrais définitivement puisque que c'est un endroit où nous allons pour faire du «gambling».

Je reconnais que les casinos ont été mis sur pied pour attirer des touristes. Mais rappelez-vous que nous n'avons qu'à faire une enquête à Windsor, à Hull, à Ottawa, qui est tout près de Hull, et vous allez reconnaître que l'industrie touristique que les casinos attire n'attire pas de touristes dans les restaurants ou dans les hôtels dans les environs. Souvent on peut dire qu'on a augmenté la participation, que les hôtels étaient pleins. Nous allons louer une chambre d'hôtel, nous nous rendons au casino, ensuite nous retournons dans notre hôtel, les poches vides. Nous avons dépensé tout notre argent. Il n'y a plus un sou qui est dépensé dans les boutiques des environs.

Je regarde dans les bars où nous allons installer ces machines vidéo. Je ne serais pas surpris qu'environ six mois après l'installation de ces machines dans les bars — nous n'avons qu'à faire une étude ou une enquête — vous allez vous apercevoir que la vente de boissons alcooliques et de bière va être réduite. Nous allons dépenser notre argent dans ces machines en pensant que nous allons gagner une somme d'argent ; c'est reconnu que lorsqu'on gagne une fois, on tient à retourner. Un de mes amis, je pourrais même dire le nom — 25 000 \$ a été gagné par une personne de Rawdon au casino de Hull. Depuis ce temps-là, la personne est flyée. Il est parti. Il a tout dépensé. Il n'a plus d'argent maintenant.

Je reconnais aussi que tout dernièrement, depuis l'ouverture du casino de Hull, trois personnes se sont suicidées après avoir dépensé tout l'argent qu'ils avaient à leur disposition. On a même hypothéqué leur maison pour venir à bout de dire, «Si je prends encore des chances à me rendre au casino et à gagner, je pourrais acheter une autre maison.» Chers amis, ne croyez pas aux casinos. Les casinos sont pour le touriste, pas mieux. Les hôtels vont en profiter, mais ça s'arrête là. Les autres dépenses, les gens n'ont pas l'argent pour en dépenser davantage.

Si nous avons l'intention d'ouvrir d'autres casinos, peut-être que je serais en faveur de le faire, mais il faudrait toujours faire attention à l'endroit où nous allons en ouvrir un. Je sais que nous allons faire l'ouverture d'un casino à Niagara Falls, qui est reconnu comme un endroit qui attire le plus de touristes en Ontario — au-



delà de neuf millions de visiteurs par année. Oui, ce sont des visiteurs, mais dans des endroits où nous n'avons pas le volume de touristes je suis contre l'ouverture de casinos.

Je crois que le gouvernement devrait penser sérieusement avant d'installer ces machines vidéo dans les bars et restaurants. Surtout si nous avons l'intention d'aller d'avant, on devrait mettre des restrictions à une certaine distance des écoles secondaires ou collèges.

Probably the minister should look at this section: Wherever there's a high school, a college or a university there should be an area in which video poker, VLTs, will not be accepted or permissible to be installed in bars or restaurants. Even though we say you have to be 19 to play those machines, we have no one in place at the present time who could supervise this or police the age of people playing the machines and we will not have, because we have decided to cut down inspectors in Ontario at all levels.

Today we are turning around and saying we will have VLT machines in bars and restaurants. We will have them supervised, and you will be subjected to a fine of \$50,000 to \$250,000. Where are the inspectors going to be to get those people whenever they play those machines?

Je ne crois pas que dans le moment nous avons le personnel pour superviser ces équipements que nous tentons d'installer dans les bars et restaurants.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Comments or questions?

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Now that we've had our last speaker on this issue, I would like to commend the member on his speech. I found it an outstanding speech throughout. I listened carefully to all his suggestions.

I think the only hope right now, because the government has the majority in the House and the bill will pass by the tyranny of the majority, as they say, is that the bill is going to committee. In opposition the present Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations felt that the committee should play a meaningful role in the process, so I know he'll be listening carefully to all representations that are made across the province.

I may try to prompt some people to show up at the committee. I hope that some of the churches that I know in my area that are on some issues very supportive of this government will be there large as life to make representations against this piece of legislation.

The suggestion — this government is very intrigued, and I heard the member mention a referendum in his speech — this government seems to like the idea the Reform Party has floated of having a referendum on a lot of items of importance, and if you're going to have a referendum on many items, it would seem sensible that just as they had a referendum in Oshawa on the casino, perhaps in this province we have a referendum on this particular issue.

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations):** What about bingo?

**Mr Bradley:** I'm sorry to hear the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, through an interjection, condemning bingos in the church halls of this province,

because I know they are raising money for good causes and it's very small-time in that particular case.

I simply ask you to listen carefully to the representations and consider having a referendum on this. I think you are making a major and outstanding error in putting forward this legislation.

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**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Prescott-Russell; you may sum up.

**Mr Lalonde:** As my colleague from St Catharines just said, I definitely think that even though this 10% of the revenue will go towards charity groups, that won't be enough, because there will not be any more money from the bingo organizations, from the drawing organizations they have going. So I still say at this point, Mr Minister, that we should think of having some restricted areas around schools, universities and colleges before we go ahead with the installation of those machines.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate? Seeing none, would the Minister of Consumer and Relations like to sum up?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** I want to clarify a few points here before we wrap up debate on Bill 75. This bill is going to introduce video lottery machines, charity gaming halls, the amalgamation of the present Liquor Licence Board of Ontario and the Gaming Control Commission. It's going to do a number of progressive matters within one piece of legislation, to put in Ontario, to put in our province the most comprehensive method of controlling gambling and making certain that charities get a fair shake in the outcome of gambling in Ontario.

As I mentioned in my opening remarks, Monte Carlo nights now, some 9,000 of them across Ontario, yield about \$12 million to charities in this province. After we have the permanent charity gaming halls in this province, we expect that charities will gain some \$80 million to \$90 million more from those particular activities.

The member for Prescott-Russell does not see the advantage of charities gaining \$100 million more out of these new initiatives? I don't believe his charities back home would agree with him.

Let's not turn a blind eye to what's going on in Ontario. We are told by the police that there are some 15,000 to 25,000 illegal video lottery machines in the province at the present time. Charities get nothing from that, the taxpayer gets nothing from that, and I think both should benefit from that activity. Not only that, but those machines are paying back to the people who play them a very small percentage of what they bet.

In Casino Windsor the bettor gets back somewhere between 85% and 95% of what he or she should play at those machines and a similar kind of ratio will exist with regard to these machines. But for us to ensure that will happen, the province will have to be certain they are looked at in a very careful manner and monitored in a very careful manner. We have put together the structure within this bill to do just that.

We have been very concerned about under-age players playing these machines. We have made it illegal for people under 19 years of age to play these machines. We have also put in this bill very tough measures on any proprietor who might allow an under-age person to play



these machines. That proprietor would not only lose the right to have that particular form of gaming on his or her premise, but also would lose their liquor licence as part of the penalty. That is a pretty dramatic penalty, quite frankly, for anybody who's in business, and therefore we are requiring any of these video lottery machines to be separated from any other part of the premise which would allow people under the age of 19 to be located.

I want to indicate at the very end that perhaps the members who are now in the House were not there when I opened my remarks. I said, and we have said very clearly, that this is a two-stage process. The first stage will be the installation of these machines in venues where gaming will be normal; that is, at racetracks and at the charity gaming halls. Whether or not we go to the second step will be made on the basis of the experience with regard to those particular venues. That particular decision has not been made at this stage.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** Members across may scoff, but we have maintained the position that we are going to do this in a more orderly and careful manner than any other province — and there are eight other provinces in Canada which have this particular kind of gaming entertainment. We are going to do it more carefully than any other and we're going to have fewer machines than any other province in our country.

I look forward to the support of members across the way who have been calling for tougher measures in dealing with gaming and dealing with the control of alcohol in the province of Ontario. They can show the support to their constituents by voting for Bill 75.

**The Acting Speaker:** Mr Sterling has moved second reading of Bill 75. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** Madam Speaker, I believe there's an arrangement that this vote will take place immediately after question period tomorrow.

**The Acting Speaker:** Agreed? Agreed.

## ROAD SAFETY ACT, 1996

### LOI DE 1996 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ ROUTIÈRE

Mr Ouellette, on behalf of Mr Palladini, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 55, An Act to promote road safety by implementing commercial trucking reforms, drinking and driving countermeasures and other aspects of Ontario's comprehensive road safety plan / Projet de loi 55, Loi visant à promouvoir la sécurité routière pour la mise en oeuvre de mesures de réforme du camionnage, de contremesures visant l'alcool au volant et d'autres aspects du programme général de sécurité routière de l'Ontario.

**Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa):** Earlier this month, my colleague the Honourable Al Palladini stood before you for the second reading of the Road Safety Act, an act that targets unsafe trucks and drinking drivers. I'm

pleased to say that with the third reading of this bill we are closer to our goal of providing legislation that will make our roads safer.

We have heard from both the Ontario and Canadian medical associations. We have consulted with representatives from the trucking industry. We have gathered input from organizations such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving and Ontario Students Against Impaired Driving. We have read the recommendations from the Worona and Tyrrell inquests. The general public has sent us the message: They want safer roads. We have listened.

Last fall we released Ontario's road safety plan, which calls for a wide range of measures to reduce collisions and improve road safety. Today, we focus on five road safety initiatives.

We are delivering a message to unsafe truck drivers and operators, and this is: Change your ways. If you don't, we'll be targeting you with dramatically increased fines. Maximum fines are increased in some cases by 10 times, to \$20,000.

This legislation also allows us to develop a conduct review system for commercial drivers similar to the demerit system for all drivers. Bad truck drivers do not belong on our highways. They will be identified and removed.

At the same time, the province is sending a message to drinking drivers: Don't do it. About 42% of all drivers killed on Ontario roads have been drinking. With the introduction of the administrative licence suspensions, drivers whose blood alcohol content registers over the legal limit or who refuse to take the breathalyser test will have their licences suspended for 90 days by the registrar of motor vehicles. This is an immediate measure aimed only at impaired drivers.

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We are delivering a message to drivers to buckle up. Over the past 20 years, the Insurance Bureau of Canada estimates that 4,500 lives have been saved by seatbelts. It estimates that another 100 lives could have been saved last year if only they had buckled up. Ninety-one per cent of all Ontarians wear seatbelts; we want 100%. We have become a province of believers that seatbelts can and do save lives.

We are sending a message to drivers with suspended licences: The free ride is over. Currently, the taxpayer picks up the tab, including court appearances by an enforcement officer, sending out suspension notices and issuing new licences when the suspension is over. No more. With this legislation, we propose a \$100 reinstatement fee that makes the suspended driver, not the taxpaying public, responsible for their actions.

We share a responsibility for making our roads safer. I think you'll agree that by removing drinking drivers from our roads, targeting unsafe truck drivers and their vehicles, and encouraging motorists and their passengers to buckle up, we are taking positive steps towards that goal.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Questions or comments? Further debate?

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** It's interesting; the previous speaker before the member for Oshawa, the member for Prescott and Russell, mentioned a pretty



startling fact — I don't know if the Legislature caught it — that there are three suicides already linked with the operation of the Hull casino. It just puts into perspective sometimes the weighty matters we have before us in approving things like video lottery terminals.

On the bill before us, generally, my party and myself are supportive of the initiative. There are some very good initiatives in the bill. I think the intention and thrust of the bill answers some of the questions that the public and the advocates have raised over the last year, that certainly I've raised myself, about some of the needs that road safety requires.

There's certainly a very good initiative about the 90-day suspension for people who are impaired or suspected of being impaired. That really sends a good message to people who consider drinking and driving. It's an immediate 90-day suspension and it takes off the road people who sometimes continue to drive even though they're under suspension; that's happened in the past. It's worked well in other jurisdictions and is a very concrete initiative.

I know the member for Welland-Thorold is bringing forth a private member's bill Thursday which is going to include also that anyone who wants to get their licence back will have to take a course. I hope the members opposite will support that member's resolution coming Thursday, because a lot of it has to do with education and counselling for people who have a problem with alcohol or impairment and driving, which we all abhor. We as a party support that initiative.

The general thrust of increasing some of the fines seems to be correct, but there are some serious problems, though, that we have to put on the record. If you look at this bill, it's typical of a look at the Ministry of Transportation, the same ministry that said, "We're going to cut \$7 million from winter maintenance and we're going to make the roads safer."

We stood up in this House day after day in the early winter, if you recall, in November and December, and said, "You're being foolish by cutting back on the winter maintenance budget." Stubbornly, they went ahead and dramatically cut that budget. You heard the outcry from every riding across this province that felt the consequences of that stupid move to cut back on winter road maintenance. They had to throw in probably three times more money because of that foolish initiative at the beginning when they thought they could ignore Old Man Winter or whatever.

This is the same Ministry of Transportation — it's very schizophrenic, because it says, "We're very interested in safety on our roads," yet the minister and the department seem to be in favour of increasing highway speed. How contradictory can you be when, in the middle of roads that weren't properly maintained, with snow cover all year-round almost, in the middle of roads covered with potholes and deteriorating across this province, the minister stands up and advocates increasing road speed? There was such an outcry from across this province that this was another mindless, contradictory initiative that the ministry has put it back under the table somewhere.

Road speed and road maintenance have a lot to do with safety, because if you ask the trucking industry or ordinary motorists on the roads, there's a direct correlation — ask the insurance companies — between the condition of the road, maintenance of the road, whether it be ordinary maintenance or winter maintenance, and the speed travelled on the road.

Again in terms of the schizophrenic attitude of this ministry, this is the same ministry that, without any analysis, took away photo-radar. They didn't even look at it to see whether it had any impact on safety, what the cost-benefits of it were. They took it away on pure, basic ideology. They took that photo-radar away, and for all we know it could have had, or was having, a pretty good effect on slowing people down. But this ministry said: "No, we're getting rid of photo-radar. We don't care what the consequences are, what the costs are, what the implications are." They took it away without analysing it.

I ask whether or not the ministry has really looked at the full implications of these initiatives. Whether you look at advocating 120 kilometres an hour on our highways, cutting back our winter road maintenance or getting rid of photo-radar, they have done no impact studies on those decisions. The motoring public has suffered the consequences of those foolhardy decisions by this government that were done essentially on whims or some kind of ideological bent without looking at the impact on the Ontario motorists, whether they be commercial or casual.

The other thing that's lacking is that from the beginning the government was supposed to produce a comprehensive road safety program. That is still not before us. This bill is one small step, but there's much more that is needed, because you can't look at road safety in isolation.

As you know, what is happening in this province, especially in the southern part of the GTA, the greater Toronto area, is that we are in a very fragile transportation quadrant. On a daily basis almost, there's some kind of massive gridlock that occurs in the GTA, and it almost paralyses the whole of southern Ontario because of one accident that may occur on Highway 427 or Highway 401. On Friday, June 7, we had an example of that. There was almost a paralysis across the GTA because of one incident that occurred. It was the derailment of the GO train in Mississauga-Port Credit.

Everybody in the GTA is dependent on the whole system being sound. This Minister of Transportation has not introduced a comprehensive program. In other words, you're not going to have safe roads if you keep shoving more and more trucks and more and more people with their cars on to our highways. The policies of this ministry have done nothing but that in the last year. They've told people that public transportation is not a priority; that to move your goods or services or yourself, you must use your car and your highway. What that does is put added stress on our highways. Therefore there are more vehicles on the highway, there is more likelihood of congestion, more likelihood of accidents and also more likelihood certainly of lost time and efficiency. That creates more stress and therefore people tend to want to cut corners.



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This is what has happened. By the dramatic withdrawal of funds from public transportation, the cutback on GO subsidies, the cutback on the major transportation systems in southern Ontario and the increase in fares — almost every transit authority in Ontario now has increased its fares — what that means is it pushes more people into their cars, more people on to the highways.

No wonder we have these gridlock meltdowns on a regular basis now. On Friday, June 7, we had a perfect example of that: The whole GTA transportation network almost collapsed because of one incident in Port Credit. On the 401 I think it was, just a couple of weeks ago, we had one vehicle that almost caused havoc throughout the GTA. At the 401 at Markham Road, this one tanker trailer became detached from a rig and flipped, spilling 6,000 litres of gas and diesel on the highway. As the officers who were on the scene said, if there had been one person who inadvertently lit a match, you could have had a disaster of untold proportions. What happens when one incident like that occurs is that the whole transportation network almost comes into a state of paralysis.

That is what has to be included if you're talking about a comprehensive road safety program. You can't keep putting people and cars on highways and expect the highways to absorb them naturally and safely. This is a one-sided, ideologically driven transportation policy which says, "All we're doing is trying to use our road system to move goods and services." It doesn't work. You can't cut back on GO, on subway construction and on public transit and expect our highways to take the hit. These gridlock meltdowns which occur on our major highways almost daily are proof that we're on the edge of a very serious transportation catastrophe. It is now very much, as I said, on thin ice.

Going back to how vulnerable we are to road dangers, when this tanker truck spilled 6,000 litres on the highway, it was reported in the *Toronto Star* that, "Hundreds of trucks — some described as ticking time bombs by transportation ministry inspectors — deliberately bypassed inspection stations in the greater Toronto area during last week's North American safety blitz."

This is another thing that happens. We have safety blitzes and they publicize them. So what happens is a lot of the regular trucking firms go to the back roads and avoid the safety blitzes. Even the ones they catch — with the advertisement — 45% of the trucks that were stopped were removed for defects. This was just June 9 — 45% removed. Probably another 45% went on the back roads and avoided the inspection stations and the blitzes.

As someone from the Ministry of Transportation said: "Debbie Thompson, a supervisor at the Trafalgar Road South scale station on the 401 in Milton, said several companies that regularly enter the scales didn't during the blitz." In other words, when there's a safety audit taking place they all run and hide.

"You get to know some of the better-known companies and we just didn't see them come by here the past few days," Thompson said. "But there were a ton of trucks that took the back routes, getting off the highway or running along Steeles Avenue and James Snow Parkway so they didn't have to go by us."

The ministry officials, the rank-and-file people, call this a cat-and-mouse game. "Ministry inspectors say a 'cat-and-mouse game' was in full force throughout the annual three-day blitz, with hundreds of trucks deliberately" — this wasn't by accident — "taking back routes in an effort to avoid being detained." Detained for what? Just to check them out and see if they're safe. This is what is happening on Ontario roads today, despite all this talk about getting tough.

I should mention too that one of the things the ministry still has no analysis of, which they have to bring forward to make this truck safety initiative much more comprehensive, is they have to do an analysis of the impact of just-in-time delivery on road safety. The ministry does not have that analysis. In other words, there's a system in place now where goods are delivered from the factory, the manufacturer, right to the site. There's no more warehousing, and this saves money. So they go directly to the site.

What this does, the just-in-time delivery system, is it poses enormous pressures on the trucking companies and the truck drivers and operators. It means they have to rush to arrive at a certain location at a certain time. If they don't get there at a certain time they are fined. There have been fines that have been told to me that could be \$5,000 for being 15 minutes late.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Do they have to go over potholes to get there?

**Mr Colle:** And you can imagine going through some of the potholes near Cornwall, Ontario, going up Highway 69, along our own 401 near Kingston. These trucks have to go through potholed roads. If they don't get there at 5 o'clock or whatever it is, they get there 15 minutes late — a \$5,000 fine. No wonder there are accidents on our highways.

This ministry has not looked at the impact of this new just-in-time delivery system on road safety, and that's why I say that is what is missing from this bill that could make it a better bill that this government has to look at. Just-in-time delivery puts enormous pressures on ordinary people trying to make deadlines, and if they don't make that destination in time they could lose their whole week's wages for driving that truck. A \$5,000 fine for being late — you can imagine what it means to an operator-driver.

Another thing that is in serious doubt here is this bill talks about getting tough on enforcement, but it's the same Ministry of Transportation that I think over the next year will lay off 1,200 men and women. Who is going to do the enforcement of safety on the buses and the trucks on our highways with all these layoffs? Right now people will tell you a lot of the inspection stations are not open; they're always closed. If right now they don't have enough people to operate and staff the inspection stations, with these layoffs that are going to continue, who's going to check the trucks, the buses? Who's going to ensure ministry standards are met not only in the inspection stations, but within the ministry itself? This ministry is being gutted of a lot of front-line people, and a lot of these front-line people take care of safety inspections, safety programs and also safety initiatives.



We're certainly honoured here to have, I should mention, the Honourable Allan Rock, the member for Etobicoke, who is honouring us by showing us how important this House is even to our federal members. Welcome, Mr Rock.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** He actually came here to hear you talk about the road safety program.

**Mr Colle:** Yes. And it's good to see that the federal party and the federal government are so interested in road safety that they're here to listen to this very important discussion on road safety, and I know the Honourable Allan Rock is interested in issues dealing with safety, being the Minister of Justice. I commend him for taking the time out from his busy schedule to come here and listen to our debate on road safety and truck safety. Thank you for being here and showing interest in a very important issue.

These layoffs: How are they going to do any kind of supervision with 1,200 fewer people? Who's going to be ensuring all the records and all the safety violations are followed up upon? Who's going to be left at the ministry offices to do this? I think, with 1,200 people gone, we're going to see a lot less enforcement. Maybe what they'll do is the same thing they've done in other areas. They'll say, "Regulate yourself," and I don't think that's the way to go. I think we need MTO officials doing the job, ensuring there's safety on the roads.

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People say, "What difference does it make whether trucks are safe?" My own assistant last weekend was driving to Montreal to go to see Jacques Villeneuve, that fine Canadian racer. She had one flying truck tire whiz by her on the 401. That's what it means. There are people who are average motorists, who are on the 401, so if those trucks and buses aren't safe, it affects all of us. That's why it's important not only to the trucking industry and to the truck operators, but to all Ontario citizens who happen to be on our roads. The condition of our roads is so important.

The other thing that is of great concern is the whole system of fines. From day one in opposition we've said what the front-line OPP officers said: "If you want to crack down on this truck cat-and-mouse game, just impose some heavy fines." I know at the beginning the ministry and the minister were saying, "No, the fines are fine," but now obviously they're going to increase the fines, although I do not think the fines have been increased enough.

We have to be a lot more serious about the fines we're going to put on because I don't think they go far enough. What'll happen is, as you know, right now the fines have been just the cost of doing business, but the average fines will probably be — let's say you've got a brake problem, whatever it is, you can get a \$265 fine; now it looks like it's going to be probably a \$400 fine.

I don't think a \$400 fine is enough. I know the front-line officers are saying, "Hit the truck operators with a \$1,000 fine that first or second time; they won't do it again," because \$400 is not enough. It's still a slap on the wrist. Sure, you can supposedly get a maximum of \$10,000, \$20,000, but that's only after it goes through the

courts and it's up to the judiciary to decide on the level of fine. But the fine at the roadside is still a slap on the wrist.

It's certainly much better; it's an increase from the \$265 fine, or whatever it is, for brakes or wheels that have problems, to go to \$400, but it's not enough. It should be a minimum of \$1,000 for having faulty brakes on Ontario highways. The \$400 right now that this bill puts in is again a continuation of a very, very poor message to the truck drivers and the operators that truck safety is important to all of us.

Another thing I want to bring to the attention of the House is that, unfortunately, a number of families have been detrimentally affected by unsafe trucks. One of the families I have been dealing with and trying to help out in this is the Worona family. Unfortunately, a member of the family, Angela Worona, was killed by a flying truck wheel in January 1995 and her sister Theresa, a brave young lady from Whitby, Ontario, has crusaded for safer roads.

She has been alongside the OPP officers, she has been in the inspection stations, she has gone to media events, she has gone to the trucking association events, she's gone to see the minister, she's been in this House. She had a petition of 30,000 names asking for truck safety. I really consider her to be a firsthand, grass-roots expert on truck safety.

Theresa Worona and her family are not happy with this bill. They're very upset about it, and I'll read the letter that she wrote showing her displeasure about this bill. She wrote this letter to the Toronto Sun. This is from Theresa Worona, the sister of Angela Worona, who had that unfortunate death.

"Forty per cent of trucks were found to be unfit during random announced inspections, as opposed to surprise inspections by the OPP when they go out looking for bad trucks and it is necessary to pull 70% from the road.

"The trucks found in the inspections of the past few days were the 40% still running on our highways with defects in spite of the fact these well-publicized inspections were taking place all across the province.

"The annual road check is presently the only method we have to measure the level of safety and compliance within the trucking industry aside from the targeted inspections. Both these inspections are dismissed quite quickly by the trucking associations as an inaccurate and distorted picture of the industry.

"The number of accidents that involve trucks may not be high compared to car accidents, but there are a proportionately higher number of cars than trucks on the road.

"An accident resulting from an unsafe rig is a preventable and foreseeable situation, as opposed to approximately 95% of car accidents which are attributable to driver error and only 5% vehicle defect." In other words, with trucks a lot of the accidents are preventable. Many car accidents are a result of driver error.

"These unsafe trucks are rolling down the highway right now with no fear of significant deterrents, even though the Minister of Transportation announced increases to the minimum and maximum penalties allowable under the Highway Traffic Act," that is, this bill. "The roadside ticket for serious infractions will still



only be \$400." That's what I'm saying; she is saying that \$400 is still a slap on the wrist.

"The question is whether or not the fines are enough to deter the offenders. The present levels have been referred to as laughable and the cost of doing business. The new levels to be introduced are still out of proportion to what the big rigs are making for operating in violation of safety regulations and taking chances with the lives of the public.

"The odds are still in favour of the violators and not the motoring public. With too few inspection stations open, and those that are understaffed, the chances are high that bad trucks are not being inspected. They are accidents just waiting to happen.

"Theresa Worona, Whitby."

Those of you who have talked to Theresa, have seen her, know that she has looked at this from a safety perspective, and a safety perspective that has had an impact on her family and her life. She feels that this bill does not go far enough with those fines and that the understaffing in the Ministry of Transportation is going to mean there are going to be less people out there inspecting these trucks. With less people and a fine that is still marginal, she feels we have to do more.

Why not a \$1,000 fine if you've got faulty breaks in a truck or a rig on Ontario highways? These companies — and I think that's where the emphasis should be, on the companies, the big moneymaking truck companies that are using Ontario highways. It's a privilege to use our highways, and if they use them with faulty brakes or faulty wheels or they're cutting corners, they should be penalized much more than the drivers, because the drivers make a meagre living. It's so competitive for drivers trying to eke out a living throughout North America. It's these trucking companies that should be the target. If there is a truck with unsafe brakes, hit the trucking company owner and the board of directors with \$5,000 for that first offence, \$10,000 for the second offence. They would pretty quickly clean up their act.

But I don't think with this bill they're going to do that. They're not going to act quickly enough. As you know, the recent truck blitz that they did across Canada shows there are essentially the same number of vehicles in disrepair on Ontario highways this year as there were last year so there's no improvement.

I hope this bill will make a little improvement, as I said, but it does not do enough, because it only deals with a lot of the symptoms of the problem. It treats the symptoms, not the cause. As I said, the causes of a lot of our problems have to do with certainly the condition of our roads.

You can't have good roads in this province when the minister has cut \$700 million from the transportation budget. You can't hide \$700 million and say the roads are okay. That's what's gone out of the capital and operating budget. So when you've got roads that are filled with potholes, that are crumbling all over this province, you're going to have accidents. To cut that \$700 million when you've got such a bad state of road repair is contributing to accidents.

They should put money back, and again I made the suggestion in my private member's bill that the way to

treat that is by having a dedicated highway repair fund put aside where every year you've got a fixed portion out of the gas tax that goes towards road repair. The members opposite voted against that recommendation. It's in every state in the union, except I think for New Jersey. They all do it. If Ontario were to do that you'd have that fixed amount every year going towards road repairs.

**1750**

This government is basically going from one crisis to another in transportation and does not have a plan for road safety repair, road maintenance or road reconstruction. Certainly, and I've said it before, this has not been the fault of this one government — this goes back to the last 10, 15 years — but this government has been warned. Last year they were warned that there's got to be an investment in road safety and in road repair and reconstruction. What did they do? They cut out \$700 million. You cannot cut that kind of money out of a budget and expect to have good roads.

Sure, you're going to fix a few potholes that the minister denied existed until his phone rang off the hook and had to have the pothole contest to bring attention to it. So people all over Ontario said: "The roads are in bad shape. Do something about it." But I tell the people of Ontario, they're still going to be in bad shape because that \$700-million cut is going to be seen in roads, especially roads in northern Ontario where the conditions are very severe. That is a very direct correlation of road safety, whether it be trucks or the motor vehicles.

There's also a very interesting editorial which I think summarizes some of the concerns that the Worona family had about this bill. It's from Whitby This Week. It's a community newspaper that's published in that fine city of Whitby, the old home of the Whitby Dunlops and that great hockey team that represented Canada so well at the international — I think it was 1968, or whatever. But anyway, a fine city, fine athletes, fine citizens. I was trying to think of the name of the guy who became mayor of Whitby and was a fantastic hockey player at the time.

**Mr Ouellette:** Bobby Addersley.

**Mr Colle:** Bobby Addersley, yes, a fine mayor, a fine representative of Canada.

This is from the Whitby This Week. The title reads, "Put on the Brakes."

"Though hardly comforting for the family of Angela Worona, the provincial government has made good on its promise to beef up legislation protecting motorists from unsafe trucks.

"And though the legislation, introduced last week by Transportation Minister Al Palladini, comes with the best of intentions it still doesn't go far enough to ensure safety on Durham region roads and beyond."

I think that's what we're saying, that this is a good first step, but you've got to go further to do something. I think that's what this editorial is saying.

"Angela Worona likely knew nothing of the minimum \$265 fine that was in place for unsafe trucks when a loose wheel from a passing vehicle smashed through her windshield on January 31, 1995, killing her as she drove along Highway 401 at the Ajax-Whitby border.



"But that fine, like the minimum of \$400, was likely seen simply as a cost of doing business for certain operators running big rigs in and around the greater Toronto area.

"Mr Palladini's ministry may have held up its part of the bargain by bringing forth more stringent safety regulations governing the rigs which run on our roads, but the proof will be in the meting out of these fines.

"The new maximum fine of \$20,000 should hold sway with most truck operators, but the question lies in whether or not it will actually be imposed by the courts." It will be interesting to see how big the fines are, whether we'll see just the \$400 fines. Will we see the big trucking firms hit with \$20,000? Will we see them? Maybe we should count the numbers. We'll be watching for that. "It's simply not worth the paper it's written on if the trucking industry isn't forced to pay up for running unsafe rigs. And the maximum fine cannot be used only in cases where there is personal injury or death. It must be used in every case where there are reasonable grounds to conclude an unsafe rig could result in injury.

"If the Minister of Transportation is, as he claims, taking aim at unsafe operators where it hurts most — in their bank accounts — then these fines must be handed out frequently, swiftly and decisively.

"No longer can the fines be tied to the cost of doing business. They must become a threat to the business."

That's from the *Whitby This Week*, the weekly newspaper which has been very concerned about truck safety in the Durham region and the greater Toronto area.

I just want to conclude my remarks by saying, as I said at the outset, that there are some good initiatives in this bill; as we mentioned, the automatic suspension; the attempt to address the potential of having demerit points for unsafe drivers. I think that's another very good initiative, that that plan goes ahead. I think that also will be very helpful in sending a clear message that safe trucking on our highways, especially for commercial drivers, is very important. These are good initiatives in this bill.

There are also some stringent controls on seatbelt requirements. I know that this is one thing that I think people have forgotten in this bill, but there are some people who have for some reason gotten these medical certificates to say they can't wear seatbelts for medical reasons, and I know this bill tries to deal with that, ensures that if you are exempt from seatbelts that it isn't just some kind of off-the-cuff exemption. It's a serious exemption, because I think there is abuse of that in Ontario and I think this bill is very correct in dealing with this concern about these abuses.

Again, the real concern expressed by the Worona family is the bill does not go far enough; it does not hand out the stiff fines from day one. That's what it should be: a minimum of \$1,000, right off the roadside.

The other thing that I feel most adamant about is that this government should pursue a comprehensive, integrated transportation policy. You can't make our highways safe unless you promote public transportation. With this ministry's 33% cut to capital for public transportation, which comes into effect January 1, it has sent an opposite message. There's no way that municipal transit

authorities will ever be able to invest in a meaningful way on a 50-50 basis in transportation infrastructure with a 33% cut, and that is the biggest cut we've seen in public transportation in Ontario since the war.

I know Bill Davis, who was awarded Transportation Man of the Year as Premier, must be very unhappy with this direction the government is going in, because, Madam Speaker, as you well know, being a clean air advocate and environmentalist yourself, if people are in buses, streetcars and subways, that means there is more room on our roads and highways for commercial vehicles. The more room there is, the less tension there is, the fewer aggressive drivers there are. There are benefits to the motoring public if public transportation is invested in.

This government doesn't understand that. What they've done is they've cut 33% from the public transportation infrastructure. GO Transit has been scaled back. They forced the TTC to raise seniors' fares 40% because of the cutbacks. Because of the higher fares, there are fewer people riding transit in this province this year than there were last year, because almost every transit authority in this province has had to raise fares, and that is what is shortsighted. You can't make our roads work if you're forcing more and more people on our roads.

That is the main objection we have to this bill in principle, that it doesn't have a comprehensive view of transportation. That is the only way you'll ever get the biggest bang for your buck. Right now the ministry is trying to basically scramble, without any direction, without any policy, and just basically go back and forth from A to B. We need some vision. We need an integrated transportation policy which has a goal of getting people out of their cars if they don't have to be, but those who have to be are on good roads, safe roads and roads that have safe trucks and safe buses.

#### 1800

I know this government has an aversion to regulation and I know they're going to deregulate the bus industry. That's another concern we have: Will these buses be safe once there's deregulation of our buses? So the aversion to regulation will have an impact on safety. That is another challenge for this government: With fewer inspectors, less staff and more deregulation, what is the impact going to be on safety?

A lot of deputants came before us from the intercity bus industry. They were concerned about safety, especially when buses are going to get older as you get more deregulated companies coming in. So regulation is required for safety. The government cannot take a laissez-faire attitude towards road safety and pretend that the trucking industry or someone else is going to ensure safety on the highways.

Hopefully they'll also get the clear message that the people of Ontario do not want speed on their highways increased. I hope that doesn't come forward again but stays where it belongs under some table. We don't need faster speed; what we need is more enforcement on our highways. The tragedy is that because of the cutbacks in OPP officers, there are very few OPP officers on our highways, very few people obeying the speed limits, because they know they're not going to be confronted.



You can drive almost regularly to Montreal or Ottawa and you're lucky if you ever see an OPP cruiser. That doesn't add to road safety.

Something this government should address too is that we need more marked OPP vehicles on our highways to ensure that people obey the speed limit. You know yourselves that you can go on any highway in the major 400 series and you try going 100 kilometres an hour and see how many people pass you. Probably 99% of them will pass you. Nobody obeys the speed limit because they know there's no photo-radar and there's no OPP enforcement. It's rare that you find the OPP out there. You can't have safe highways, whether it be for trucks or motorists, if you don't have any kind of enforcement, therefore you have all this aggressive driving, fast driving. That is something that really adds to a lot of accidents.

We have to make sure that the ministry addresses that. That hasn't been addressed in this bill yet: What are they going to do about the chaotic speed on our highways? Young people, old people, drivers of all descriptions are going above the speed limit. If we're going to crack down on unsafe drivers, we have to crack down on speeding drivers, and right now there seems to be basically a green light. Highway 401 is like the autobahn: Go as fast as you can; nobody is going to do anything to you anyway.

We have to ensure that the Ministry of Transportation, along with the Ministry of the Solicitor General, makes an investment in more OPP on our highways. We need enforcement. Obviously you have to go that way because you don't want photo-radar and you have no alternative, so you have to get some money and invest it in OPP officers who are out there enforcing speed limits because right now it's totally out of control. Our highways are filled with speeding motorists.

Who knows the average speed? The ministry probably knows what the average speed is. It could be 120, 140, 160. They should certainly know that. You can't have safe roads with that kind of speed. It's especially dangerous when a lot of people are so stressed out these days and they're trying to get to and from work, commuting all over the place. I think that's another ingredient.

I've laid out our party's position in terms of what we feel is good about this bill. In general we support the bill but we want to put the government on notice that there are other things that we're expecting. In order to treat road safety comprehensively, we hope those other measures will come forward, but we commend the government for at least taking this step. As I mentioned, there are a number of initiatives that are worthwhile backing and that's why we're supporting the bill.

We, as members of the opposition, want to ensure that you follow through with the other recommendations we've made and that other people have made to essentially bring back Ontario roads to the safest and best roads on the continent. We have had that kind of reputation in the past. Let's hope we can do that again. There's no reason why we can't, but remember that you can't do it by just looking at one piece; you have to look at the whole spectrum of transportation, and that includes enforcement, public transportation and reinvestment in our roads because they keep this province together. It's

such a large province that we have no other alternative but to use our roads, and we have to ensure that we keep investing in them to make them safe and usable.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Comments or questions?

**Mr Ouellette:** A couple of points need to be clarified. First of all, the bill doesn't deal with a number of issues the member discussed such as winter maintenance, road speed, photo-radar and bus deregulation. The member talked about studies and that we had no comprehensive program. Funny, last October we gave the member a comprehensive program that listed over 100 initiatives that are coming out as studies come in and the research is done, and this government is bringing forward those over 100 initiatives.

Again, public transportation — not dealt with in this bill.

He talked about inspectors and that there were cut-backs. In fact, we've hired more inspectors for bus deregulation or for buses and for the trucking industry to make sure it's safe out there and we intend to hire more. There were a number of issues he mentioned along with out of service, where he stated it was 45%, when in actuality it was 39%, which is still an unacceptable level, and we're working on taking those numbers down, but when you target vehicles in truck inspections, you expect to have a high rate of out-of-service.

We are continuing unannounced spot checks to make sure that things are safe out there and that the trucking industry is being looked at in a serious way. He also mentioned trailer hitches. The research has determined that it was an isolated incident and wasn't some catastrophe that was going to happen again on our roads. Also, we need to mention that we've increased the funding on road rehabilitation from \$240 million to \$350 million.

Having said all that, we thank the member and the party for their support on the legislation and we look forward to further initiatives coming about.

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** As usual, I appreciate the comments of the member for Oakwood, who I think has described the attributes of this bill and what improvements could be made to it and has set the bill in the context of Ontario's highways today, which I think is very important.

He mentioned public transportation; he mentioned capital spending. Operating and capital spending in the ministry is actually down about \$700 million over historic levels in this province, and I believe that will have an important negative effect on our road system, therefore on the people who are on those roads and obviously on safety.

I represent a constituency, a large part of which is on Highway 17, the Trans-Canada Highway. I was talking with the editor of the Manitoulin Expositor last evening, who said to me he had just been talking to a friend of his who had driven the entire length of Canada. In his opinion the Trans-Canada Highway, Highway 17, between Nairn Centre and Sault Ste Marie is the worst stretch of road in all of Canada.

I mention that because we have many communities directly on that highway with a huge number of trucks. Many trucks coming from Manitoba from the west come



down that highway. It is a main artery. The maintenance level, combined with the number of trucks that are out there, causes great difficulty and a very dangerous situation for my constituents and indeed all the people in Ontario who travel that road. So I would ask the ministry if they would seriously look at Highway 17 from Nairn Centre through to the Sault, particularly to about Blind River, and do something about that.

1810

**Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton North):** I just wanted to indicate that this is a positive initiative and sometimes listening to the opposition, it stuns me that they make it sound as if the roads have been in a condition that is totally untravellable, and that's not the case at all. Sorry, I didn't mean to burden you with that word.

I toured northwestern Ontario as part of our chamber of commerce tour just in May after we presented the budget. Quite honestly, I compared the condition of the roads up there with the condition of the roads on the 401 and I found the ones up there to be far better. There were a couple of patches, but quite frankly they were already repaired and the trucks were running on them. They were doing the work well and I had very few complaints from the business people when I was up there. I travel this province a fair bit on behalf of the ministry and I think the roads are in great condition.

I find the comments by the member for Oakwood very interesting when he introduces someone who had absolutely nothing to do with this bill, and it made me wonder whether the member for Oakwood probably knows as much about potholes as the honourable member from Ottawa knows about gun control.

But in any case, I just wanted to say that this is a positive bill that will deliver and upgrade the condition of the roads in this province, something that has been sadly neglected particularly in the last five years, so that we once again can travel Ontario like the US people used to travel the USA.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further comments or questions? The member for Oakwood has two minutes to wrap up.

**Mr Colle:** It reminds me of that old ad, "Travel the USA in your Chevrolet" with Dinah Shore, whatever it was. That could be the slogan for the ministry.

Again, I've tried to be, I think, clear that there are obviously very positive initiatives here. We all agree with that and I commend the ministry for doing that. Being in opposition you have to mention the fact there are some needs, and I'm trying to steer the government into a position of looking at all the other pieces that make up the transportation puzzle that we're involved in here in Ontario.

I know it's very demanding and challenging. You're talking about huge investments and I think, by doing that, we're hoping we'll remind the public how important our roads are and how important road safety is that we can put it up on the agenda. Perhaps it hasn't been high enough on the agenda in the last decade and that's what this maybe will achieve.

I certainly thank the member from Manitoulin that we've got this stretch of highway — maybe we'll get the member for Brampton North to travel along the 17 highway between Nairn Centre and the Sault and see what you think of that. But we know categorically the Provincial Auditor said 60% of our roads in Ontario are substandard. So there are some pockets that are in good shape, but there are some in very bad shape that are in a deteriorating condition.

In terms of what I was referring to on that 401 spill was, I was saying it just demonstrates, because I think the cause is still being looked at, how vulnerable we all are. At any one time, if one of these trailers goes down, not only is there a traffic gridlock situation, but there could be some serious accident that occurs as a result of a spill. We are very vulnerable now because I think there's some kind of dramatic change taken in transportation in the GTA. We seem to be constantly in gridlock, much more so, and it seems to have happened in the last six months or so. Some changes are taking place, and I hope the ministry looks at that.

*Report continues in volume B.*



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## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 25 June 1996

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mardi 25 juin 1996



Speaker  
Honourable Allan K. McLean

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président  
L'honorable Allan K. McLean

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 25 June 1996

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 25 juin 1996

*Report continued from volume A.*

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## ROAD SAFETY ACT, 1996

## LOI DE 1996 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ ROUTIÈRE

Continuation of debate on the motion for third reading of Bill 55, An Act to promote road safety by implementing commercial trucking reforms, drinking and driving countermeasures and other aspects of Ontario's comprehensive road safety plan / *Projet de loi 55, Loi visant à promouvoir la sécurité routière pour la mise en oeuvre de mesures de réforme du camionnage, de contre-mesures visant l'alcool au volant et d'autres aspects du programme général de sécurité routière de l'Ontario.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Further debate?

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** I would like to thank the Speaker for recognizing me. I was a little surprised that no one else from the other parties is wishing to participate in this important debate, because I think this is an important debate that all members should be involved in. Dealing with safety issues, especially in the truck transportation field, is one that over the last year or two has become something that the public has been very, very much concerned with. Our caucus is indicating to the government that we are pleased it is moving on this particular bill.

We don't think this particular bill is the complete answer, but for those over there who are always claiming that the opposition is such a negative crew, we're saying to you: "Look, this is basically the right direction. You're doing the right thing here," but we do have some concerns about — the member for Oakwood has very well articulated that — the level of fines that are incorporated in this.

Many of these companies that we have on Ontario's roads are huge multinational companies, and fines of \$300 or \$400 are a cost of doing business. They aren't what anyone might consider to be a deterrent for these companies. Unfortunately, in the capitalist world we live in, sometimes it's easier to pay a fine than to maintain your fleet. I think we have to send a clear message to trucking transportation companies across this province that we want and we need them to be responsible, and the way to do that is to have a level of fines that encourages compliance.

Having said that, I want to say that particularly in my constituency, trucking and truck transportation is a big business. I want to applaud probably our largest employer in the district of Manitoulin, which is Manitoulin Transportation Inc, which is one of the largest truck transportation companies in Canada. They operate a huge fleet of

trucks through Manitoba, all of Ontario, Quebec, some of the northern United States and they do it from the small town of Gore Bay on the North Shore of Lake Huron. They have demonstrated that they can do this with about 100 employees at the head office in Gore Bay doing the administrative functions and providing the dispatch, employing a large number of the people in the Gore Bay and Manitoulin area, and they are a responsible firm that has urged me, over the years, to speak up for strong measures in truck safety.

Their attitude when they're talking to me is that they want to maintain their fleet to the highest standards and they expect their competitors to do that also. When their competitors are allowed to get by with some shoddy maintenance, it makes it all the more difficult for good, reputable companies to compete in the industry. So I want to say that, at least in my view and I believe in my constituents' view, moving to stronger safety regulations with trucks is something that even the industry applauds and we will find that to be extremely useful.

I as an MPP spend a lot of time on Ontario's highways. To get here, it's 576 kilometres — I bet you didn't know that, Mr Speaker — down Highway 40, up Highway 6, across Highway 17 and down 69 to 400 to the city here. I've noticed that there are increasing numbers of trucks on the roads. The member for Oakwood talked about the just-in-time delivery situation; that situation has increased the number of vehicles we have on the road because of course it's part of our modern world, it's a way companies can compete.

E.B. Eddy in my constituency at Espanola, for example, ships a lot of the pulp from their mill in Espanola by truck to the E.B. Eddy mill in the Ottawa area. When they're doing that, I'm told that if there's an eight-hour holdup of trucks between the two Eddy plants, the Ottawa plant will have to shut down. So that's a fairly tight schedule, considering you're travelling eight to 10 hours to accomplish that. But it provides industry with great economies, far less warehousing, far less money tied up in inventory. It makes good sense, but what that means is we have more and more and more trucks on our highways.

I'm having a little difficulty understanding government policy in this fashion. The increase in vehicles on our roads has been accompanied over the years by an increase in taxation: fuel taxes, gasoline taxes, insurance taxes. I understand that in the new automobile insurance bill there is actually a new tax that's hidden in this and that now part of your premium will go to pay the OHIP costs. That wasn't there before. Essentially it's a new tax on auto insurance, which is a tax on motorists, which is a tax on truckers, which is a tax on all of us.



We've increased the net take in terms of revenue from people using our roads absolutely tremendously. It has increased by \$300 million or \$400 million, probably more, in the last two or three years. That has not been reflected in the amount of money the Ministry of Transportation is providing to provide enforcement of these truck transportation regulations or improvements in our roads or, as the member for Oakwood has pointed out, some of the alternatives to just road transportation. Public transit, whether it's GO, TTC, municipal bus service in places like Elliot Lake — whether it's in those places or spent on roads, there is an effect. You have to see this as a combined policy, as a broad policy. If we can take some people off our roads, obviously the roads last a little longer, they're a little safer, everything's a little bit better.

We're seeing the government cut back on GO, cut back on the TTC. Take norOntair, Mr Speaker. I know you'd be really disturbed to know that norOntair is no longer flying, so people in northern Ontario do not have the benefit of the fine service that norOntair at one time provided across northern Ontario. I was shocked to learn that Bearskin, which was providing service to the city of Elliot Lake, is now pulling out. I think they're going to be there but one more week in the city of Elliot Lake providing air service. So a city of 14,000 people, almost 200 kilometres from Sault Ste Marie or 200 kilometres from Sudbury, will have absolutely no air service because the private sector have found they cannot make money and therefore they're not in the business.

But the government under the present minister and the present Premier apparently doesn't believe that places like Elliot Lake should have air service and is doing nothing about it. What does that mean? That means there are more people going down Highway 17, either to the east or the west, and that means they're out there with the trucks. Most of Highway 17 is two lanes, extraordinarily dangerous in two seasons: in the winter when weather conditions can make it very difficult and in the summer when the increase in tourism, the number of recreational vehicles, trailers, boats, that sort of thing, really stretches the present Highway 17 to its ultimate. There's a need, we all know that, in places like Highway 17, if not for four-laning, at least for more passing lanes and certainly better road maintenance.

As we come supporting the government on this particular initiative, we are concerned that the overall transportation policy of this government is not working a bit and that they've got the priorities quite confused. So I want to say to the government, we need to have more enforcement on those highways. The regulations will not work without more enforcement.

I heard the parliamentary assistant say, "Yes, we're going to put on a few more inspectors," but I don't think that will be the answer, because as you put on a few more inspectors, probably the most important truck enforcement comes from the OPP, and the number of OPP officers presently on our roads is diminishing as we speak.

I guess I'm just up here to say to the government today, you're on the right track as far as this particular piece of legislation goes. Increase the fines. Make sure

they really are a penalty to those who don't want to play by the rules in Ontario. Have safe practices. Make sure your driver training is adequate, more than adequate; we should be demanding excellence in driver training. Make sure you have a transportation policy that encompasses factors like winter road safety. Make sure that our roads are plowed and sanded and kept up in the best possible way during our winter months. Make sure that the roads themselves have the capital expenditures made on them to ensure safety, to ensure that you don't rattle the truck or your car to pieces just driving down one of the Queen's highways. Make sure, in short, that you explore the alternatives to road transportation.

All those components, and probably some more that I haven't mentioned, are a true transportation policy. If this is just one component of a true transportation policy, we can accept that, but we see the government being hugely deficient in this area and we call on the minister to come forward with a comprehensive policy that includes public transportation, includes more capital maintenance, includes road improvements on highways, as I said before, like Highway 17, the Trans-Canada. Let's make sure that we do have the safest roads and the best roads in all of Canada, in all of North America.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Comments or questions?

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** I would just like to commend the member from Manitoulin on his expert local connotation on this issue. I think a lot of us who live in southern Ontario don't realize how critically important good roads are in northern Ontario. Maybe we can mention again, as the Manitoulin Expositor mentioned in its article, that we shouldn't have these stretches of highway like the one we have from Nairn Centre to Sault Ste Marie. Something should be done and we shouldn't be just looking at the GTA or St Catharines, which has all these great highways. Places like Nairn Centre need good, safe highways.

I think what has to happen also is that the ministry must recognize that no matter how advanced our economy becomes — and just as a note to you, Mr Speaker, a former neighbour of mine — you may know him; his name is Don Tapscott — is probably the foremost pioneer in the new digital economy; you know, all this high-tech, computer, cutting edge, space-age, paradigm shift digital economy. He phoned me up in the middle of my pothole contest: "This is Don Tapscott." Like the Marshall McLuhan of the computer age, he phoned me up and I thought he was going to talk about the paradigm shift or the new digital — no, he phoned me up about potholes. He said, "I'm driving all over this province and the roads are horrible."

Don Tapscott, the Marshall McLuhan of the 1990s, who is into the new space economics, is saying roads are important. No matter how much you get into the Internet and you surf the Net, you've still got to ride the road. That's why we've got to invest in our roads.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further comments or questions? The member for Algoma-Manitoulin has two minutes to wrap up.

1830

**Mr Michael Brown:** I suspect that after one of the worst winters on record, certainly the people of Algoma-



Manitoulin, if they had been speaking with the member for Oakwood, could have proposed some of the largest potholes we could see in the province. As a matter of fact I was told in places, and witnessed myself, potholes in potholes.

Having said that, one thing I neglected to mention in my original speech — I didn't really want to do that, but sometimes my memory slips — is our only real form of public transportation left in Algoma-Manitoulin, the ferry, the Chi-Cheemaun. I want to encourage people in southern Ontario to take the opportunity to drive to Tobermory, take the Chi-Cheemaun across the South Bay mouth and enjoy Manitoulin Island and the North Shore of Lake Huron in one of the finest constituencies in this country.

That reminds me that the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission has just recently appointed new members.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Were they Tories?

**Mr Michael Brown:** I think they all were, but I don't really have a difficulty with that. What I do have a difficulty with is that since about 1988, under a Liberal government we had appointed a person from Manitoulin to the board of the ONTC because they operate the ferry service. For the first time since then there is no one on the ONTC board from the district of Manitoulin. The people in my area rely on this service for tourism and transportation, and not to have one member from the district of Manitoulin is a total insult to my constituents.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member's time has expired. The Chair recognizes the member for St Catharines.

**Mr Bradley:** I have a great interest in the issue of road safety, as I'm sure every member of this House has. I indicate again at the beginning our support for the general thrust of this piece of legislation. It's always said that the opposition tends to be negative about government initiatives or automatically opposes government initiatives. Of course that isn't the case. We see an example here where I think a fair consensus has developed among the three political parties in this Legislature, and I'm sure in the public as well, around the need for even more effort to improve road safety on our highways.

Much of this is centred on two different thrusts — one is the impaired driver and second is the driver of large vehicles such as transport trucks — and trying to increase safety in that regard. I suspect the public at large is very supportive of this legislation and I think even those who potentially could be victims of these pieces of legislation, if I can use that terminology — you can say "deserved victims," if you will — recognize the importance of it.

I noted that David Bradley — I think he's the president of the Ontario Trucking Association — has always supported the need of the government to keep a close watch on safety as it relates to trucking in the province. In our province we have many trucking firms that have an enviable record in terms of safety, both the safety of the drivers, those operating the vehicles, and the safety of the vehicles themselves. They are as interested as anybody else in getting the bad actors off the road: first the bad trucks, and second, those drivers who are in violation of the traffic act in the province of Ontario.

This will go part of the way. It is a move, as I indicated, in the right direction. Certainly if you talk to people who travel the major highways — I know the ones in southern Ontario better than the northern Ontario ones — one question I get almost continuously is, "When are you going to do something about truck safety on the highways?"

One thing we recognize is that truck transportation has increased tremendously over the past decade or so. Many goods used to be carried on freight cars on trains, some on ships that go through the Welland Canal in my area, but more and more we're seeing goods being transported by means of trucks. That means that those who are driving smaller vehicles are finding more and more trucks on the highway. One need only travel on the major four-lane highways — they call them the 400 series highways — to know that there are occasions, particularly during the evening, where you'll see substantially more trucks than cars, so it's even more important that we work on truck safety.

Many drivers have good a driving record, are very proud of that record and deserve a pat on the back for it. Those who are in violation, however, must face the consequences suggested in this bill. There is an increase contemplated in the fines according to this bill. We feel that they could go even higher, and even more important would be that the companies, not just the drivers, be the ones to face those fines.

If a driver is driving at a very fast speed or in a dangerous fashion, one is likely to assume that the driver is going to receive the fine, although there are circumstances where drivers, as the member for Oakwood, the Liberal transportation spokesperson, said, are required to meet certain schedules and for that reason are driving perhaps faster or more recklessly than they would want to do. That is something we have to address, and we can address that only if we're prepared to levy fines or other penalties at the level of the board of directors or the management of the company as well as individual operators.

We also know, and I've seen this experience in other ministries, that using that method is the most effective. If you take the person who actually commits a minor violation but does so at the behest or suggestion of others, that is, those who are higher up in the echelon of the company, you will find that person perhaps is being unfairly treated by the judicial system when it should be the person who ultimately gave the orders for the transportation to take place in such an expeditious manner as to cause violations.

In terms of vehicles themselves, all of us have been on the highway and witnessed most unfortunate circumstances. I drive the Queen Elizabeth Highway quite often and I'm sure that all of us who drive the QEW or Highway 400 have come within inches, perhaps, of serious accidents from time to time because of a variety of circumstances.

One of those circumstances involves items falling off a truck. I remember being in a vehicle a few weeks ago, driving along, and a huge piece of wood came flying off a truck. I was able to manoeuvre to miss it. Unfortunately the car behind me had to manoeuvre through the



guardrail, so a significant accident happened. I don't think there were fatalities or serious injuries, but nevertheless we saw an example —

**Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister without Portfolio [Workers' Compensation Board]):** Did you find out?

**Mr Bradley:** The member for Burlington South asked if I stayed around to find out. I certainly did. I made a telephone call, because Mr Palladini says all of us have cell phones, to 911 to help solve this problem. It was interesting because as fast as the accident happened, the Ontario Provincial Police had already been notified, so there must be some validity at least to what the Minister of Transportation has to say about the number of cell phones on the highway. I think of the consciousness of the public, of the need to report accidents of this kind quickly. It's an example, however, of something coming off a truck, and in this case it was carrying this particular piece of equipment.

There is also a problem where unfortunately there have been fatalities and serious injuries as a result of wheels coming off vehicles and other pieces of a vehicle itself coming off and causing major problems. There's simply no excuse for that taking place. One thing we should be able to count upon is the vehicle to be mechanically sound in every way to avoid those most unfortunate circumstances.

The other problem is that because trucks are so large, because of the way they're built, the way they're constructed, they have to have enough room so they can manoeuvre. Even when a truck isn't specifically responsible for an accident, we will find that trucks often jackknife and, as a result, several other vehicles are involved in that accident. It means those who operate the vehicles have to do so in a very careful manner to avoid this. Certainly this bill will again encourage more of them, I think, to do so and, for that reason, I think it's worthy of support in this House.

1840

I understand, from what I have seen, the safety blitzes are a good idea. Unfortunately, if the minister is interested in getting publicity instead of the results from the safety check, we find that people start to avoid the safety check location. In other words, when the Minister of Transportation says, "Today we'll have safety checks at the following locations," you'll find those who know they're in violation with their vehicles will take the back roads or will take another route of some kind to avoid that safety blitz.

In the truck stations where they do the checks, they still find about 40% have some kind of safety violation, but where it's unannounced, where it's truly a surprise safety blitz, you find up to 70% of the vehicles have some form of safety violation. I think, particularly when they are significant and serious violations, they should be subject to very strong penalties. This bill improves that. It is far from perfect, but it does make some improvement in that regard.

I'm sure that those who spend the money, in other words, those good, corporate citizens in the trucking industry who decide they're going to spend the necessary funds to maintain their vehicles and they purchase good

vehicles and they train their employees appropriately and they give their employees sufficient time to carry the goods, those companies should be rewarded by having those who do not follow those steps face the wrath of the Ministry of Transportation and the judicial system of Ontario. That's only fair to the driving public in terms of safety; in terms of business it's fair to the good business people in our province who have made that particular choice.

The other problem, however, we encounter that is not dealt with adequately or at all in this bill is that of road safety. Besides the fact that our roads used to be envied by many tourists who came from other jurisdictions to Ontario — that is not the case today, by the way — but besides the fact they envied it and that helped to bring them back to Ontario, of course we look to good roads for safety.

The lines being painted on, I notice in some cases, particularly in bad weather, are hard to follow on a two-lane highway and sometimes on a four-lane highway. The appropriate markings at the side of the road and in the middle of the road delineating the lanes are very important. We take them for granted, but the necessary maintenance and upkeep must take place to ensure that drivers know where those lines are. If there are any signs down or any of the markers at the side of the road, it's important to have them replaced as often as possible.

Highways naturally must be designed well. We count upon those who do that job to design them in an appropriate fashion. In terms of construction, it's important as well to try to make sure the construction period is as short a period as possible and that there's as little disruption of traffic as possible, because what happens then is that people who are long delayed tend to speed up to try to make up for lost time.

Even if it takes a little more of an investment to keep the roads open — and I want to say that the Ministry of Transportation, I've noticed over the past 10 years or so, has done this quite well. They use the new equipment, the new markers, the new fences I'll call them, in the middle of the highway now that allow them to keep lanes open. That didn't always happen in the past. The person who invented those must, first of all, be a multimillionaire and, second, has certainly done a service to the people of this jurisdiction because it allows the road, such as the Queen Elizabeth Highway, to be kept open at the peak traffic times with four lanes, two lanes in each direction.

The other problem we have is potholes. I'm sure the trucks as well as the cars have to make last-minute manoeuvres to avoid huge potholes. I noticed particularly in eastern Ontario that there are virtually potholes in the potholes. The members in western Ontario may or may not have noticed some of the same damage, but certainly I noticed in eastern Ontario, perhaps the winter being a bit more severe in that area, that the potholes have been quite bad.

Despite the fact the minister is out there with his shovel and whatever it is he's putting in — I think it's asphalt he's putting into the holes on the highway — nevertheless, we have a major problem. I want to say we



are very supportive of the maintenance of highways and I think it's shortsighted of any government of any political stripe to allow the roads to deteriorate to a state where they could be the cause of an accident. I notice that there are probably more claims this year of the provincial government from motorists in this province, including truck drivers, for damage being done as a result of major potholes than has been the case in any other year.

Where there's a widening needed — and it isn't always the case there's a widening needed — then I think it is worthwhile proceeding with that. One of the areas that we would know is Highway 416 going into the nation's capital between Ottawa and the 401. It would seem to me that would increase safety, because when you have a large number of vehicles on a two-lane highway, people become impatient, they pass and accidents happen. That's most unfortunate when that happens in our province.

The northern highways present a special challenge. Those who know Highway 69 between Parry Sound and Sudbury know it is a well-travelled highway, as well as several parts of Highway 17. It seems to me in those cases a widening of those highways would increase safety rather significantly. Already we have some areas where the slower vehicles can pull over to the side. There is still the problem of when they re-enter back to the two-lane situation. When there's a miscalculation, there can often be an accident.

Another thing I want to lament, if I may be lamenting this evening — and, Speaker, you are a former municipal representative — is what I'll call the dumping of responsibility for many local road systems on the local municipality. In some cases it may make sense. Where it is mutually acceptable, one could say it makes some sense; in other areas, it doesn't.

The member for Hamilton Mountain, who is in the House this evening, would know along the Queen Elizabeth Highway there are several service roads between Hamilton and Niagara Falls. I understand the provincial government wishes to relinquish responsibility for those service roads and leave them with the local municipality. The local municipality, already facing significant cuts, is having a difficult time with that.

Those who have served at the municipal level as dutifully as many of the members of the House have would know that to be a problem. I know that the members of the government caucus will be speaking to the Minister of Transportation and, more appropriately, to the Minister of Finance and the Premier about the lack of advisability of holus-bolus giving financial responsibility back to local municipalities for those roads.

The level of fines I've mentioned. I also want to say that one of the other problems we have is that the Ministry of Transportation is laying off so many staff. I should say this, because there may be Ministry of Transportation officials here and this may get back to the minister. I hope they're not contemplating an abandonment of the move of the Ministry of Transportation to St Catharines. You always hear these rumours out there.

I remember when the announcement was made by Premier Peterson in St Catharines that the Ministry of

Transportation would move to St Catharines, including 1,400 jobs at that time, moving to a building in downtown St Catharines, this was hailed by all and sundry in the Niagara Peninsula. Unfortunately, since then, under the previous NDP administration that went down to approximately 1,000, as an estimate, and now there are fears that it will be less than 500. In fact, I suspect that in the back rooms of the government there are many who would like to withdraw the Ministry of Transportation, take it back to Toronto, and those of us who don't represent Toronto areas would be very concerned about that.

I know the member for Niagara Falls would be extremely concerned. He's in the House and he's nodding, either in the affirmative or nodding off, one of the two. With my monotone voice I can understand why he might be nodding off, but he says not. I know he would be supportive of maintaining those jobs in the Niagara region and ensuring that the Ministry of Transportation and the minister maintain that promise to keep those jobs there. So I will take all the nods I see on the government side as an affirmative in that regard.

**1850**

But the point I'm making is that there are some 1,200 staff who will be eliminated from the Ministry of Transportation. That means there's going to be less opportunity for the provincial government, in this case, to be able to enforce those new laws that we see. There are going to be fewer inspections that are going to be possible and that's most unfortunate.

When you talk about deregulation, when you talk about downsizing, it sounds good in theory and it has to be done in certain circumstances. There isn't anybody in the House who doesn't realize that. But you have to look for a long time and carefully at what the ramifications of some downsizing might be. When it comes to public safety, I'm sure the public would not want to see that happen. That's why I am concerned about safety on our highways, as I see this ministry eliminating some 1,200 positions.

I also see a \$700-million cut overall in the expenditure from last year to this year in the Ministry of Transportation, and that doesn't bode well for traffic and highway safety. There are fewer OPP officers on the road than we used to see. Perhaps a dozen years ago, when you travelled the highway from St Catharines to Toronto, you could see a number of Ontario Provincial Police cars. They were vigilant to make certain that people were not recklessly speeding or that people were not engaged in other violations of the traffic act.

They were there. People didn't always appreciate it when they were the ones stopped, but at least they were pleased to see that somebody cared enough and that there were enough police available for those purposes. I don't mean sitting there with a speed trap hidden somewhere in an unmarked car. I mean chasing vehicles that are switching from lane to lane, causing major problems, or the left-lane bandits who are poking along at 40 miles an hour, if I can use the old terminology, in the left lane. I could understand the frustration of drivers at that as well.

We have to have that kind of policing. I know when the government was in election campaign mode, there



was a suggestion that we would see more police officers available to enforce the laws of this province. Instead we've seen a significant reduction in enforcement officers, both at the provincial and the local levels. This again does not bode well for the safety of our highways.

This bill is one that will certainly receive the support of this party. I've heard the NDP say they are supportive. This will make the parliamentary assistant happy because he will be able to get some praise from the opposition instead of the usual darts being fired his way. I want to commend him on his role of taking a special interest in this and becoming knowledgeable of the bill.

What the public never realizes is that sometimes the parliamentary assistant knows more about the contents of legislation than the minister. The parliamentary assistant would not want to concede that publicly because he would not want to annoy the minister, but I know he has taken the time to look at various aspects of the bill, to promote them, as is his job as a member of the government, and to listen to the input from the opposition and from outside.

If there are any changes that might be made in a regulatory sense — because I don't think this bill is going to committee. I think this is going to be passed. This is third reading, so it'll be proceeding to be agreed to by the Lieutenant Governor — if there are any regulations that come with it, I know the parliamentary assistant will recommend good regulatory changes to the minister. I would caution again that the parliamentary assistant might pass along to his colleagues the need for those people to enforce the act.

I also want to encourage him to talk about the need for public transportation, the support of public transportation, to ensure that there are fewer unnecessary trips on our highways. I understand the need for individual vehicles. I have one. I think most people in our province have one. Some people have three or four in their driveways when you go by.

Particularly in rural areas or small towns or if you're in Sarnia — and the member for Sarnia's here — and you want to get to various other places, Windsor, London, Toronto or something of that nature, it's difficult to find public transportation that is always as timely as you'd like to have it. But it is important to have that public transportation available in our communities and certainly on our highways to ensure that we don't have unnecessary vehicular trips taking place that are harder on the highways and of course increase the chances of accidents taking place.

When I see significant cuts to the Toronto Transit Commission, to GO Transit and to St Catharines Transit as another example, because of a reduction in funding from the provincial government, they will not be able to upgrade their vehicles as they would like to. Second, they will be having to cut service where it would have been nice to maintain that service. Third, they will have to hike fares and that will make public transit a little less attractive than it might otherwise be.

Taking into consideration all of those arguments and suggestions, I urge and commend upon the parliamentary assistant his personal intervention with the minister and with others who have responsibility in this area. I wish

them well. I hope this legislation is helpful. I know that government always tends to think the opposition hopes something will go wrong and then they can point and say the government was wrong. I think you'll find in many cases such as this we hope you're right.

I notice in the other aspect of the bill which deals with drivers who are impaired drivers, again I think you're going to have good support for that among the general public. Even among those who may in the past have driven in an impaired state, it's going to make people think a lot more about it ahead of time.

I don't know what the figures are, and maybe it's because kids have more money now, but it is interesting to see the number of kids now who will get together when they're going out on the town, so to speak, and hire a cab. Four or five kids will hop in a cab, go down to a tavern and then take the cab home, or they will have a designated driver. For all the finger-pointing we might do at kids today, I suggest there wasn't as much of this taking place a generation ago, and that contributes to safety.

There will be some who will be critical about civil rights being violated in this case because you're going to suspend a licence simply because a person would not take a breathalyser test or because that person is shown to be impaired. Well, there is a solution to that: Don't become impaired. I think that's what this legislation is saying. "Don't become impaired and then drive a vehicle." That's what the legislation is saying. Everybody will know the rules ahead of time.

I'm sure there will be a communications plan that will come forward from the government that will outline the new responsibilities on drivers and operators of trucks in this province. By the way, that's the kind of information I think is defensible on the part of the government as long as it's not self-serving propaganda in the mode of large newspaper ads and advertisements but rather factual information. I think factual information is very defensible, and if you have a communications plan that calls for that, you will not see me rise in this House to be critical of factual, non-political, non-promotional advertising that allows people to know what the new laws are and what the consequences are for those in violation of those laws.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this particular bill on third reading. It's unusual for lengthy debates on third reading. We have canvassed, however, many of the issues and I know the government has been eager to hear what the opposition has to say on these issues and has certainly welcomed the rather extensive contribution that has been made by members of the opposition. I know the members of the government who are sitting here are simply delighted to have the opportunity to be sitting in the Legislative Assembly at 7 o'clock on Tuesday evening.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further comments or questions? The member for St Catharines has two minutes to wrap up if he wishes.

Further debate? Seeing none, Mr Ouellette has moved third reading of Bill 55. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? It is carried.

Resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.



1900

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE RATE  
STABILITY ACT, 1996LOI DE 1996 SUR LA STABILITÉ  
DES TAUX D'ASSURANCE-AUTOMOBILE

Mr Sampson, on behalf of Mr Eves, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 59, An Act to provide Ontario drivers with fair, balanced and stable automobile insurance and to make other amendments related to insurance matters / Projet de loi 59, Loi visant à offrir une assurance-automobile équitable, équilibrée et stable aux conducteurs ontariens et à apporter d'autres modifications portant sur des questions d'assurance.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** The Chair recognizes the member for Mississauga West. Do you have a statement?

**Mr Rob Sampson (Mississauga West):** I have a few comments, Mr Speaker. Thank you very much. It's not often I turn down an offer to speak to auto insurance since it's a subject I've been working on for a few months anyhow.

I want to start off by thanking the members of this assembly, and frankly members on both sides, who have worked very closely with me and the Ministry of Finance staff as we have brought forward auto insurance reform.

I think the member for Welland-Thorold talked about this in his maiden speech, so to speak, on auto insurance this session, spoke to that process starting when he came to my office. He was one of the first to come to my office to talk to me about this particular subject and then it went on through a series of consultations with members of the government and on the opposition side as well.

We had a draft bill and regulations referred to the standing committee on finance and economic affairs in February this year, and again members involved from all sides of the House were asked to participate and they did. They brought forward some very helpful suggestions to us. If one were to take a look at the difference in the legislation between the draft bill and the regulations and the final bill and regulations, you'll see that we did listen to the people who came before us.

I want to speak briefly to the product we have laid in front of this House for discussion and consideration. We will be the third consecutive government to reform auto insurance and I suppose that for this we all, as legislators, should apologize to some degree to the drivers of Ontario and to the people involved in the delivery of this product, because it has been and has represented a very unstable product in a very unstable environment for Ontario drivers.

It's difficult for one when one buys an auto insurance product to know what one is getting if every two or three years the government just changes the game plan. That was clearly one of the issues we had to address when we took a look at auto insurance reform. We had to make sure that for the interests of the consumer, for the interests of the Ontario driver, we designed a product that would be around for a while. Sure, one might have to tinker with it as it matures and as the needs of Ontario

drivers mature, but clearly we had to design a product Ontario drivers could rely upon year after year to provide them the basic coverage and protection they've been looking for and have not seen in previous auto insurance reforms.

I think what we've offered to the Legislature for its consideration here today is a fair and balanced system indeed. It's fair because it returns finally to the Ontario driver the right to seek action against the at-fault party for the damages the at-fault party has caused the individual. I'm not talking about the physical damage. I'm not talking about the repair of the broken glass or the dented fender. I'm talking about the personal injury that a claimant, an insured, may have suffered as a result of an accident. It's only fair that Ontarians be allowed that right, and that's a right that the previous government took away from Ontarians. That's a right that we, during the election, committed to redeliver, and we've honoured that commitment.

I also said I believed our plan was a balanced plan. When I say that, I'm talking about the balance between benefits that are available to claimants regardless of their fault and benefits that are available to claimants as long as they were not at fault. I've already spoken just briefly to the benefits available to one who is not at fault — that's the right to sue — but what about those of us who are involved in accidents where, frankly, we have made a mistake, a mistake in judgement or whatever, and have been involved in an accident? What kind of benefits are available to us?

We believe there should be some very basic benefits available on a no-fault format. I say "very basic" because it was clear to us in the review of auto insurance that it wasn't necessary to design a plan that provided a Cadillac system for those who chose not to want a Cadillac insurance system. I'm not talking about Cadillac in the make of a car; I'm talking about Cadillac in the form of the payments and benefits that one would get as a result of an accident.

Should one choose to provide extra insurance, I think there should be that option, and we've designed that into this plan. There's a very basic no-fault plan on one side of the balance, and on the other side we think a fair and reasonable access to the court system to sue the at-fault party for the damages that have been sustained. That balance is there, but we've also had to, we feel, adjust the level of the balance so that we had a basic auto insurance plan that was affordable for Ontarians.

I'm not going to stand here and suggest that if one were to buy the top-up provisions, it's going to be the same price as if one didn't buy the top-up provisions. Clearly, if you're going to seek and require additional income coverage, income protection on a no-fault basis, you've got to pay for it, but if you're doing that, then clearly you have the income to pay for that. So there's a good match there.

I want to also briefly speak to a couple of other consumer initiatives that we've designed into this plan. I want to make it very clear to this House that this particular auto insurance plan our government is bringing forward is truly driven for the benefit of consumers in Ontario. It hasn't been designed for the benefit of the



industry, as some may lead you to believe, Mr Speaker, and I know you're a reasonable man and you wouldn't be led to that conclusion right off the bat; and it hasn't been designed for the benefit of the medical practitioners, frankly, like the previous NDP plan has now benefited the medical practitioners.

I would encourage you, Mr Speaker, to take a look at the streets and the street corners as you drive through your own community. You will probably see a number of medical treatment facilities that have sprung up over the last couple of years. If one were to argue that the previous government's plan has not benefited that community, I think they have not been watching the development of those clinics grow and grow and grow.

We've not designed this plan for the benefit of brokers either. Brokers will be involved in the delivery of the product, but we've designed this plan to benefit the consumer because in doing so, if indeed we've designed a plan that will benefit the consumer, that will also serve the best interests of all the other stakeholders in the plan.

Many people came to us and said, "As a consumer, we need somebody to go to as a last resort to help us resolve market practice deficiencies within the industry." These would be as they relate to payments of medical benefits or other types of benefits in addition to the pricing and the dealing as one buys auto insurance.

We've responded to that. We have suggested in our legislation that the Ontario Insurance Commission create an ombudsman to deal with these issues and concerns as a last resort, because we have specifically said to the industry, "We expect you to also have an ombudsman position or ombudsman type of role within your own company, as an underwriter, within the industry in general, and then finally, if the issue has not been dealt with at those levels, at the insurance commission in the form of an ombudsman there."

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We've also suggested to the industry, as part of our commitment to come to grips with how one insures the high-risk market, that they should cease and desist the use of this rule called the lapse-of-coverage rule. That is where one will be thrown into the Facility Association, the high-risk driving category, if one did not have insurance coverage for 12 months over the last 24 months. There was a reason why that rule was there and I won't go into that because I believe I spoke at length to it during the second reading debate.

There are clearly signs that the industry had a tendency to stretch the use of those rules, so we suggested to the industry that they discontinue the lapse-of-coverage rule, and they've done that. But we are also committed as a government to making revisions and refinements to the arrangement that will allow one to be insured in a high-risk driving category. That will be called the Facility Association review and we'll be taking a look at that through the summer months in the expectation we can come forward with a final solution, in regard to how that plan is dealt with, in the fall or early winter months.

We've also suggested that retirees be offered a discount. They're offered a discount now, but nowhere reflecting the true discount that I think they should be entitled to, given the types of claims they would expect

to get in the event of an accident. Many retirees do not have an income loss in the event of an accident. The pension plan continues to pay. I had many come to me and say, "If I get involved in an accident, I don't have an income loss, so tell me, why am I paying for it?" I think that's a fair statement. We need to provide some flexibility so that the true loss retirees suffer as a result of an accident is reflected in the cost of the premium they're paying. It's not fair to lump them into the same category as regular income-earners, and so we suggest to the industry that they don't.

Many people, when they buy auto insurance, do it through their local broker. I say many, not all, because there are some who actually purchase directly from the insurance company. Now, in the day and age of electronic telecommunication, many are buying their auto insurance over the phone. I suspect some are actually buying it using the Internet. I've not heard of any situations, but I think that's actually possible.

It was clear to us that when one went through the broker network it was important for the consumer to know, when they received a quote and a price, how deeply they had probed the market competition for that particular price and that particular policy. We've suggested in our legislation that you have before you for consideration that the brokers be required to disclose who it is they write a policy for. It may be up on the wall or on the glass doors as they go in the door, but I think it's important that the consumer knows who the broker is representing in regard to auto insurance policy, and also who the broker received a price quote from, because I would suggest in many shops where there are numerous companies being represented, not all companies are providing price quotes. The consumer is entitled to know that information.

I want to conclude by saying clearly that what we've tried to do, as I've said earlier and I said in our second reading debate, was design a plan here that was a pro-consumer, pro-Ontario driver plan, something that provided the product stability, something that yes, indeed, provided rate stability, something that was affordable, something that was fair and balanced between the two systems and something Ontario drivers could rely upon for the protection of their own personal body, the people in the car, their income and the damages to the vehicle.

I'm encouraged by the support this plan has received from the industry so far. They have made some very positive statements in regard to potential price reductions where they see rates going forward. Most of the stakeholders, I would say almost all of the stakeholders, have committed — and I think this is rather interesting for this particular auto insurance plan — to try to make this thing work.

We've suggested such things as the setting of fee schedules between the industry and health practitioners. Both parties are prepared to come to grips with that and it wasn't clear to me that any of those words of encouragement, so to speak, were available under previous revisions. So I encourage all members of this House to support this legislation which I believe will work to the best interests of Ontario drivers, finally.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions or comments?



**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** I'd like to take just the two minutes that I have for this so it won't eat into the hour and a half I have prepared for my opening remarks to comment to the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance with regard to the work of the committee.

I agree with him, of the committees that I've worked on in the two years or so that I've been in the Legislature, I think it was one where truly every member of the committee was trying to find the right solution to what has become a continually uncontrollable problem in the area of auto insurance. So I echo the parliamentary assistant's comments there.

I think the chairman, Mr Chudleigh, at the time was fair in the way he dealt with the issue, and at the end of the committee meetings I think we all felt that we had made a reasonable attempt at satisfying our concerns and listening to the concerns about auto insurance.

I would, though, since this is questions and comments, pose a question to the parliamentary assistant and perhaps he can just refresh my memory. When he refers to retiree discounts, I agree with him that many companies provide retiree discounts at the present time, but the parliamentary assistant suggested that maybe these discounts aren't enough. Perhaps he could help me and enlighten my understanding of it: Will there be specific discounts that companies will be required to give to retirees and, if so, what will those discounts be? I ask for his help in that area.

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** The parliamentary assistant, the member for Mississauga West, however well-meaning and hardworking in putting together this package, suggests that it's about and for the consumer. I've listened to the debate and I actually even participated in one of the sessions where people came forward and presented to the committee, and I suggest to you that after having spent some significant time in this, it is not in fact about and for the consumer; it's in fact about and for the industry.

Another group that's going to make a lot of money in this at the end of the day will be lawyers.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Good for the fund-raisers.

**Mr Martin:** And certainly good for the fund-raisers; exactly. It'll be good for the lawyers because this moves the whole question of insurance away from no-fault, where people knew what they were paying for and, in the end, knew what they were getting. Now it will all be back in the courts, so those who can afford a good lawyer, those who have access to a good lawyer, will win.

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What will happen ultimately, because of all of that, is that the industry will find a reason because there will be some very dramatic and high-profile law cases that will cost a lot of money. So the industry will base the increase in premium that will ultimately come on that, and in the end the little guy, the working person in Ontario, the person who needs his car to go to work and to live will end up paying more. We will be back dealing with this issue again at another time, hopefully with another

government, re this legislation, and where the people of Ontario wanted this to work, in fact it isn't going to.

**Mr Bradley:** I certainly wish the parliamentary assistant well in this, but give the caution that many other governments have thought they've had a scheme which is going to make both the consumer and the person who is paying out the amount of money to the consumer when it is necessary to do so, happy.

We recognize, as the member I think has conceded, that it is difficult to provide adequate benefits, fair benefits and, at the same time, keep premiums at something that's an acceptable rate. You have tried to balance; I hope you're successful again in this one. I mentioned it previously for a couple of reasons: One is that in case there is a different government in later, that government won't have to wrestle with automobile insurance again because it seems that each new government has to wrestle with automobile insurance and I don't think any other governments would look forward to that. I hope on that point of view that you're successful.

I think people have to understand one basic thing: The payout to people who have claims is going to be a smaller payout in certain circumstances and that may be what you have to have to have lower premiums, because if you talk to the average person on the street, they're concerned about the level of premiums. Most of us don't think we're going to have to make a claim; we hope and pray that we don't have to make a claim to an insurance company, but sometimes it does happen.

Again, as I mentioned before, I hope it balances out, that you've allowed some tort, that this does balance out, that there can be some fairness as a result of that. But again, we may all be dreaming in Technicolor if we think it's going to work. I wish you well in that, and I know there's been considerable consultation. I'll chat about that a little later on.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further comments or questions? The member has two minutes.

**Mr Sampson:** I continue to be encouraged by the words of support coming from various parts of this Legislature. I know that the purpose of our design was to try to get something that was going to be around for a while. I should tell the member for St Catharines that indeed I think with a bit of tinkering here and there as we go along, the next government will not have to reform auto insurance. But I don't want to encourage him too much because the next government will not be his nor will it be of the NDP, as he well knows, but we'll see that in four or five years.

With respect to the comments from my friend the member for Sault Ste Marie, I should tell him that — I believe he said the poor working man would be disadvantaged or worse off by this plan, and I disagree with him. The not-at-fault and I think even the at-fault, but certainly the not-at-fault working man under this plan will now be able to sue for and recover from the at-fault victim's insurance company economic damages they have suffered as a result of the accident. They're clearly better off than the current format where they just get a costed dollar amount that does not represent their economic loss in any way whatsoever and that's it. I think that's blatantly unfair, so I believe the average person is better off.



In addition to that, the average person on this plan will be paying for the benefits that represent the type of claim that he or she will be making, not \$1,000 net a week, which is the current maximum. That's something they would never suffer as an economic loss and that's something they shouldn't have to pay for.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Crozier:** I'll attempt not to be adversarial about this. We seem to be in kind of a mellow mood this evening, so I think we simply want to make our points and get on with it. But I will say at the outset that a few of the comments just a minute ago about what's good for the consumer, will the consumer benefit more from it, will the consumer get more out of it, will the consumer be able to collect more from it — you know, we can talk about economic loss and we can talk about non-economic loss and we can talk about structured settlements and we can talk about catastrophic impairment and income replacement, non-earner benefits, medical rehabilitation and attendant care benefits, optional benefits. We can talk about all those things, but what it boils down to is that the insured public in this province is tired of high insurance premiums. I suggest that unless they're in an accident, they couldn't care less about any of this. The overriding fact of all of this is that premiums have been skyrocketing and the motoring public wants to see lower auto insurance premiums.

Whether this plan will give them that, time will tell. The OMPP that was brought in in 1990 survived more or less until about 1993. The previous government made a disastrous change to that insurance plan that caused rates to increase at an outstanding rate. Part of the reason the industry is giving its support is that they say: "We have a bad plan. Bill 164 was a disaster and we want to get out of it, and in some cases we'll give reduced rates right off the bat," because they're only speculating. Perhaps they've even got reserves; maybe those companies have reserves built so high that they can afford to give this a year or so to work itself out. But one of the facts in this case is that I think they've bought into it and they're willing to do almost anything to get out of the current insurance regime.

We're going to get rid of 164. Is this new bill going to be any better? Time will tell. Perhaps if it comes in in the year 1996, by the year 1997 we may have an idea of whether it's working, and the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance says, "We'll do some tinkering."

I've talked to some people in the insurance industry. Some are genuinely behind this, genuinely feel it's going to make a difference. I've talked to others who said: "We can't live with what we have now. We have to change it." It's interesting, but the same word, "tinkering," came up. I don't know whether tinkering will solve it or whether this may be absolutely perfect. All we do know is that the insured public out there is going to demand stable insurance rates, and we're told that "stable" auto insurance rates are going to be increases of about 4% a year. I don't know whether the public understands that, but they're going to increase in the neighbourhood of 4% a year. They're going to demand that this plan work, or it is going to find us with the same problem we had before.

1930

It was suggested by Mr Sampson that we need only look around to see the medical treatment facilities that have sprung up around the province. I don't see where this bill is going to close those facilities. Yes, they're going to have to be a little more accountable, and there's going to be a fee structure down the road somewhere; I don't know when that's going to come or how effective it'll be. But I don't think those medical facilities are going to close. These rehabilitation centres are with us and are going to be with us for a long time.

What we have to ensure, and I don't think this bill addresses it, is that there aren't vested interests in these, that lawyers and doctors and maybe even insurance companies don't have an interest in these rehabilitation centres. The bill calls for disclosure. If your doctor's going to send you to a rehab centre, the doctor has to say, "Oh, by the way, I own part of that rehab centre." If it's my family doctor, if I can't trust my family doctor, who can I trust? Is that going to prevent me from going to that rehab centre? I don't know. But I do believe that vested interests should not own part of these rehab centres, because I think it opens up the possibility of abuse.

When it's suggested that brokers will have to provide to the insured the numbers of companies the broker receives a quote from before they recommend a particular one to write a policy, the parliamentary assistant suggested, "It might even be posted on the door." The problem there is that it might be posted on the back of the door. If we're going to have this as part of the legislation, that brokers have to disclose the companies from which they receive quotes, I think it's going to have to be part of the documentation of the policy so we can be sure the insured has full disclosure and that there's no chance they might not be aware that in some cases a broker maybe only has one or two companies from which they can receive a quote.

Part of the problem is that many brokers simply don't have very many companies to choose from. In fact, some brokers only have the Facility Association to choose from. If I'm an uninformed person looking for auto insurance and I go into the XYZ brokerage and that broker says to me, "Here's the price I have for you; it's with the Facility Association and that's the company I received a quote from," what does that mean to the uninformed? He or she may still interpret that as being the best price the broker could get. I think that has limited benefit to the insured to disclose this, although certainly it's a step in the right direction.

At this late date, it might be interesting to suggest that rather than companies being able to withdraw from brokerages because of experience rating, perhaps all companies licensed to insure in the province of Ontario should have to provide a quote to any licensed broker. Wouldn't that be interesting? I don't want to name them, but I can see a few friends of mine in the insurance industry right now who would be quaking at that kind of thought, because of course they want to write only the best business they can. It might not be known generally to the public that a broker can't write with just any insurance company, that many insurance companies



simply withdraw the privileges of writing from a broker because their experience rating is bad, they've had too many accidents, they've written too many policyholders who have had too many claims. After all, the uninformed public just says: "Isn't that what insurance is all about? If I have an accident I should be able to make a claim. What difference does that make, whether the broker wrote me or another broker wrote me?" I only suggest that as a way to get some interest, and perhaps for some of those brokers who don't have very many companies that will insure them, it might then make them a little more competitive as well.

We've talked since February about auto insurance. I mentioned at the outset that we can go through all the parts of this plan that we have talked about, but the important thing above all to the insured is that they get value for money — and this is in the insured's own mind — that they have fair, stable and in fact reduced insurance.

I think too great a percentage of the insured drivers in the province don't understand all the intricacies of this plan. I suggest that many of us don't understand all the details in this insurance plan — with perhaps one exception, but I don't see him here tonight, so he probably won't warn me that I'm uninformed. It would be quite an undertaking, but there should be a great effort made to educate the insured public so they know what they're receiving.

With that, it's probably all been said over the last few months. What it really comes down to, as I suggested at the outset, is that the public will decide — this plan won't decide; the public will decide — whether they're being treated fairly when it comes to benefits and the public will decide whether they're being treated fairly when it comes to premiums. Frankly, in this case I hope it all works out, because for too long the public has been held in confusion because successive governments have told them they had the solution to the auto insurance plan. I hope that to some extent we've moved toward that in this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Comments or questions? Further debate?

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** Very briefly — I know this is third reading; our caucus articulated its position at some length on the occasion of second reading. I listened carefully to what Mr Sampson had to say during the course of his comments about this, and I should tell you, I appreciate that people have varying views about this. I for one am not concerned, concerned in terms of being frightened, about the return or restoration of tort for innocent victims. That's something that New Democrats have believed in for a long time. The 1987 submission to the Osborne commission authored by Bob Rae and Mel Swart indicated clearly that our position, as was developed in British Columbia by New Democrats there, was one wherein we believe that innocent victims should be fully entitled to a full replacement of their income and to compensation for all their injuries.

It is worthy of note, however, that insurance companies fall into that family of companies that are financial institutions, and financial institutions in this province and

in this country are increasingly acquiring greater and greater power and demonstrating less and less regard for the consumer. Let me tell you this one: I got mugged earlier today. I did: mugged, as if my wallet had been picked out of my back pocket and every last nickel and dime plucked. Who was the perpetrator of the crime? It was the Toronto-Dominion Bank. As sleazy as they come, I tell you. Let me tell you how they do this. Let me tell you how they pulled this off. In this case, it was the Toronto-Dominion Bank.

I wanted to put a couple of hundred bucks on my GM Visa card over at the Toronto-Dominion Bank. So at lunchtime, I went down to a branch, not far from here, where I had had an account for a number of years. I simply wanted to pay off the Visa, and I did, and then I said to the teller, "I have an account here, and maybe I should put \$5 or \$10 dollars into it to reactivate it," because they get concerned if an account's been dormant, right? There wasn't a whole lot of money in it, maybe \$300 or \$350, as I recall.

**1940**

Well, she searched the little computer scroll. The last time I took money out of it was five or six years ago. She scrolled it up and said, "Not only do you not have any money left, you owe us money." I said: "But how can that be? This is the Toronto-Dominion Bank, the TD Bank. How can that be? I entrusted my money to you, a small amount." From time to time, if I needed some cash, I would come and make a withdrawal. A couple of times I think I deposited money. I recall that I had received a letter some years ago indicating that the account was considered dormant and that I had to fill out a form and send it back in, and I did, and I haven't received any correspondence from them since. Talk about thievery, talk about being mugged. The Toronto-Dominion Bank had been, on a regular basis, it appears, pulling money out of my account under the guise of any number of so-called service charges to the point where now I owe them money for letting them have my money undisturbed for a lengthy period of time.

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** What ever happened to the sock?

**Mr Kormos:** Talk about rotting my socks. That did rot my socks. I started to get a bit of a handle on how operators like the banks of this country are running rampant over little people, in this case the Toronto-Dominion Bank, for which I have even less use now than I did before. At the end of the day, a couple hundred bucks, fair enough. I would far sooner have given it to charity, to an organization that would have far more need of it than would the Toronto-Dominion Bank, thieves that they are.

That's where the billions of dollars in profits come from. You've got a little bank manager there who says, "Gee, I can show you a computer printout of the last transaction, but I can't access the record of how we've been trickling this money out of your bank account." I trusted them. I had confidence in them. A small amount of money, like so many people. How many people in tough times like this have more than a few hundred bucks in the bank? I trusted them with my money; I let them use it. Well, they took it. The banks are doing this,



obviously, not only to me but to a whole lot of other people, little people. That's where the billions of dollars in profits are coming from. Mr O'Toole's sitting here with me right now and he's aghast that the Toronto-Dominion Bank would engage in this sort of skulduggery.

In the context of banks and financial institutions, because we are speaking to the insurance bill, what I want to speak to is the fact that the banks, thieves that they are, in this case the Toronto-Dominion Bank, so ready to empty my account without so much as a phone call or a letter — do we really want them selling auto insurance now? Not likely. If I can't trust them with a couple of hundred bucks in a savings account, how can I trust them to sell me auto insurance and not rip me off, scam me, skulduggery me in that swinish way they did when it comes to my auto insurance?

I got ripped off by the Toronto-Dominion Bank, and I told the bank manager to watch the legislative channel some time this afternoon, because I knew I was going to be talking about financial institutions in the context of this auto insurance bill, the auto insurance industry being a part of that family of financial institutions. I didn't want to neglect to mention this robbery by the Toronto-Dominion Bank, in which I have no confidence whatsoever.

I'll tell you this: I'm lucky that I do most of my stuff with the Atlas and Civic Employees' Credit Union. I would say now to people out there who think the banks are gouging them, who think the banks are reaching deep into their pockets — and in so far as the Toronto-Dominion Bank goes, be careful, my friends. If you've got any deposits in the Toronto-Dominion Bank — and I don't think the deposit insurance is going to cover that. Somewhere in the fine print, at the end of the day, what they did was a legal theft. I'm, needless to say, more than a little bit distraught about the fact that a bank I had trusted could take my money without telling me and then, to boot, to add insult to injury, tell me that I owed them money. I owed them money for giving them my money. It really took me by surprise. I was aghast. The solution, of course, is credit unions and the credit union movement, and the folks at the Atlas and Civic Employees' Credit Union down on East Main Street in Welland I'm confident in and know I can trust not to rip me off the way the TD Bank has. That you can bank on.

Why I appreciate the credit union movement, among other things, is that they're far more trustworthy than banks are, especially, in my experience, the Toronto-Dominion. To boot, they're cooperatives; they're owned by the members. That's why, as you know, Speaker, I'm an advocate, as are my colleagues in the caucus, of — just as credit unions are owned by the members — an auto insurance system that's owned by the drivers of the province, a driver-owned public auto insurance system, like British Columbia's, like Manitoba's and Saskatchewan's, a system that works.

You always remark about — and again, I complimented Mr Sampson far too much when I spoke to this on second reading, not because he didn't deserve it, but because he'll probably end up using it in one of his householders. But I do and I did express gratitude and I thank him once again for having allowed me to partici-

pate, and he was very candid during the course of these hearings, for having allowed me to speak with him in the first instance, when he was seeking input. What really bothers me, though, is the fact that the industry clearly doesn't have a handle on this.

I welcome the restoration of tort. That's basic. Tort is a very fundamental principle that says the wrongdoer should be responsible for the wrong that she or he does to somebody else. It goes back to Leviticus, Speaker. You're aware of that. It goes back that long.

**Mr Chris Stockwell (Etobicoke West):** I've heard this speech before.

**Mr Kormos:** Mr Stockwell says he heard this speech before. I'm glad he heard it before, because now he's going to hear it again. I welcome the restoration of tort. What boggles the mind, though, is that the insurance industry used to say to the government that it's tort that's causing the premium increases. You heard that too, didn't you, Mr Stockwell?

**Mr Stockwell:** We always knew it was flim-flam.

**Mr Kormos:** You were there. You heard the auto insurance industry when the Liberals were in government. You heard the auto insurance industry say: "Please, give us no-fault. Reduce tort, because it's tort that's generating the cost." Then, by God, if the Liberals didn't acquiesce, because we went through the list of contributors, donations come election time, and you should have seen the booty the Liberals raked in from the insurance industry. That Peterson government did their bidding, all right, and it introduced no-fault insurance, Bill 68. Then, believe it or not, the next government finished the job the Liberals began. They did. The next government reduced tort rights.

**Mr Martin:** But we didn't get the booty.

**Mr Kormos:** That's right; that's how naïve that was. Mr Martin points out they catered to the insurance industry without getting in any way, shape or form anything in return.

But now we've got the industry coming back and saying, "No, eliminate the no-fault and give us tort back, because you see, it's no-faults that are generating the cost." The industry itself has no idea what's happening within its industry. It has no idea. One thing about which we can be sure is that the next government will readdress auto insurance. The next government is going to be compelled to address auto insurance yet one more time, because we know that the premiums are going to continue to go up and up and up. We know that the auto insurance industry is going to continue to gouge and gouge and gouge. We know that this legislation, introduced by the Conservative government, has got all sorts of little kickers in it to make sure — the dice are shaved. That's what it amounts to. The dice are shaved. You look at the little points here and there when you look at the reduction in no-fault benefits. Never mind the cap, please, Mr Sampson, because you know that isn't the real issue; you know that, you're smarter than that.

**1950**

The real issue is that they've reduced the weekly benefit from 90% of net down to 80% of net. You don't talk a whole lot about that, do you my friend? You don't speak a whole lot about that.



You also know full well that you've shaved the points in favour, you shaved the dice in favour of the insurance companies by requiring them, on a claim where an innocent victim is entitled to compensation, by requiring them to pay in terms of economic loss only that amount that would be equal to the no-fault payments until such time as the matter is resolved or tried by a court.

That gives the insurance industry a strong edge, because you know what they can do? They can force earlier settlements by pointing out that the victim, the innocent victim, only gets 80% of his net income instead of his or her real income replacement until settlement or trial. They can point out to a victim: "We're going to hold you hostage. We've got a gun to your head." And they're going to force that victim to settle earlier and they also have the capacity, because the industry always has, to protract settlements until such time as — even when they know that they're going to end up having liability determined against them, they know they can shave points. It's true. They can shave points by restricting it —

**Mr Stockwell:** So why don't you make it public?

**Mr Kormos:** Mr Stockwell asks why I didn't make it public. Trust me, I would have, and what a legacy —

*Interjections.*

**Mr Kormos:** All of a sudden, we've got all these people who were fans of public auto insurance. I'm pleased to see them return to the fold.

I know there are Conservatives sitting in this House who recognize the inevitability of public auto insurance, who recognize the inevitability of it because they're prepared, notwithstanding that they're Conservatives, to recognize that, what the heck, it was Vander Zalm's Social Credit in British Columbia who maintained the public auto insurance system there.

Now we have, of course, the blessing of the third New Democratic Party government in British Columbia, Glen Clark enjoying the legacy left to them by Dave Barrett back from early 1970s, the legacy of public auto insurance left by Tommy Douglas to Saskatchewan literally decades earlier.

At the end of the day, we're not going to see reduced premiums, Mr Sampson, you know that too. We're not going to see stabilized premiums. We're going to see premium increases that will carry on as they have in the past under no-fault regimes and before that under tort regimes. We're going to see premium increases that are going to gouge little people, working people, retirees, young people and students. We're going to see premium increases that are going to result in yet more and more uninsured motor vehicles on the road, notwithstanding the huge fines Mr Sampson proposes. But he doesn't understand: People drive without insurance, some because they simply want to take the law on, but most because they simply can't afford the insurance. They couldn't before; they're not going to be able to afford it any more so under this new regime.

The fact is, it ain't going to work. Mr Sampson in his heart knows that. Mr Sampson in his heart knows it. Mr Sampson is as suspicious about the potential for the success of this scheme as he was about Bill 164 and about Bill 68 before that.

I tell you, Speaker, if Mr Sampson is suspicious about the capacity of this legislation to succeed, I am too, because he's the one who spent a whole —

*Interjections.*

**Mr Kormos:** No, I understand. He's got to stand up in the House and say it's going to work. That's his job. He's the parliamentary assistant. He makes 78 grand a year plus another — how much is it for a parliamentary assistant?

**Interjection:** Some \$10,000 more.

**Mr Kormos:** Another 10 grand a year or so more plus some extra staff people here and there, and every once in a while, the minister may give him the American Express card, the corporate card, the one that goes to the ministry, and every once in a while, the minister might — you know, a little of Bistro 990, maybe up to the Four Seasons and share some sharp digs there. Maybe Mr Sampson, when he responds, will come clean and tell us where the minister — he's the parliamentary assistant —

**Mr Sampson:** Where do I eat? McDonald's. Burger King.

**Mr Kormos:** He says McDonald's. We know McDonald's doesn't take the American Express corporate card. Please, Mr Sampson, don't try that one.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** He's practising deception again.

**Mr Stockwell:** That's out of order.

**Mr Kormos:** I think something is out of order here, Speaker; that much I can tell you. There's probably a whole lot out of order here; that much I'm convinced of.

We're not going to be supporting this bill any more now on third reading than we were able to support it on second reading. It's bad legislation; it's knee-jerk legislation. It fails to do what the last two auto insurance bills similarly failed to do; it fails to rein in an industry that is beyond control. It simply is. We're no more likely to reduce premiums than the Toronto-Dominion Bank is to give me back the money it took from me out of my modest savings account here at their branch in Toronto.

Fairminded people are going to understand that this bill is just a little bit of a public relations exercise; nothing more, nothing less. We end up with the same victims — both drivers and injured people — as we've had historically. This bill is going to do what perhaps no other phenomenon could do, and that is finally convince people once and for all that public auto insurance here in the province of Ontario is the resolution to this crisis that the Tories have only compounded.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Sampson:** It's always a pleasure to hear the member for Welland-Thorold speak on the subject of automobile insurance.

**Mr Stockwell:** Oh, cut it.

**Mr Sampson:** I say it was a pleasure because I didn't have to experience any of the other times he spoke on automobile insurance. It certainly is indeed a pleasure today because he spoke only for somewhere in the neighbourhood of 15 minutes, which is about one hundredth of the time he's spoken before.

The member suggested to me that I should be honoured that he was complimenting me on our work — my work and the ministry's work — on auto insurance



reform and that I perhaps will use that in my householder. If the member takes a look at the election results of the NDP in Mississauga West last June, he can be well assured that I will not be using any support from the NDP in a local householder of mine.

The member speaks very eloquently about public auto and how he is firmly behind public auto, and I don't doubt that. I'm a bit concerned that the public auto concept has somehow all of a sudden reappeared as a platform of the NDP for now. But I should tell the member that I would be very cautious as a voter of this province about buying into a public auto plan that particular government would be prepared to run, because I don't know if I would have confidence in somebody who over five years spent \$50 billion more than they had in the till and somebody who, as it relates to another public insurance system, workers' comp, has taken that thing to the ground and almost killed it.

**Mr Bradley:** I'm waiting to hear from the member for Etobicoke West as well. I wanted to probe further because I caught only a part of the speech by the member, much of it on television, and I wanted him to go through the chronology of the previous government.

I know the great commitment, first of all, of Mel Swart, our good friend who today is celebrating his 77 birthday. I think it is today; certainly it is this week. A fine gentleman he is. He is the individual who was the predecessor to the present member for Welland-Thorold.

I was interested in the chronology of the issue of public auto insurance previously, when the member was in the cabinet, or it may have been subsequent to that, because I know of his strong commitment to public auto insurance and how it was that did not come about. I know of the strong support of the member for Welland-Thorold and his party for public auto insurance and I know how difficult a decision it was for the government and the previous Premier, Mr Rae, to deal with an issue where it had been a major part of the platform and then it did not proceed. I'm wondering what arguments were marshalled at that time by the opponents of government auto insurance that would have prompted the New Democratic Party to abandon this part of the platform to which I know my friend from Welland-Thorold was very committed. I sat in the House for most of his 17-hour speech on the previous insurance bill, and while it wasn't always as charming as his usual speeches in the House, I wanted to hear what happened to that subsequently because of his strong commitment to auto insurance in the public venue.

2000

**Mr Marchese:** I want to comment on the Liberal remarks. Only the Liberals vacillate ever so skilfully and perpetually from right to left, for as long as I can remember them, and they continue to do that, and God bless.

The member for Welland-Thorold made some important comments and made a good link between the insurance company and the banks and the fact that they're very powerful institutions, financial institutions that know how to gouge the public ever so skilfully as well. He talked about the banks; 90% of the money the banks control is our money and small business's money. They use our money, 90% of it, to lend outside of the country,

to lend 15% to governments at high interest rates, using our money to give back to their own private investors, those investors who only put in approximately 10% of the money. It's an incredible thing that everybody should know about. That's why Mr Kormos, the member for Welland-Thorold, speaks about credit unions — because they're democratically controlled institutions, controlled by the public. Banks, which control 90% of our money, are not democratic institutions and gouge the public — the working Joe, the middle-class person — day in and day out.

I have more faith in the predictions the member for Welland-Thorold makes about this bill when he says we will not see reductions as a result of this bill. It's a question of time that will prove it one way or the other, but I predict, like the member for Welland-Thorold, that the rates will not go down, in fact that they will go up, and the little guy, the middle-class person, the student, will continue to see rates skyrocket. Only a public plan will solve it, and I'm committed to that as well.

**Mr Stockwell:** The difficulty you have when Mr Kormos rises on this particular issue is that all three parties and all three governments have had a kick at this bill, and each time it's been brought forward Mr Kormos has found something violently wrong with it and the way it protects the consumers and the motoring public in Ontario. He found a great deal of difficulty with a Liberal piece of Legislation.

**Mr Kormos:** Oh, tell me about it.

**Mr Stockwell:** Well, he did and he spoke for a long time. He campaigned hard and his government got elected. He was there. The government got elected and it was going to run public auto insurance. He got in and, lo and behold, they introduced a bill and of course he had problems with that one. He said, "No, I can't support that," which I accept.

Now our government has come in and we've decided that we're going to try and fix this mess that's been left to us. We brought this bill in and Mr Kormos has a problem with that.

At the end of the day, the ultimate problem is, the concern that Mr Kormos has is that he wants public auto insurance; it's that simple. But the other problem he faced is that the general public doesn't. They don't want it because they know we run the WCB, the government runs the post office, the government runs all these programs and initiatives, and we do a damn poor job in all of them. The fear they have is, after looking at the BC model, just imagine if you put them in charge of running public auto insurance. This place would be broke within about three weeks.

The concern that you have, Mr Kormos from Welland, is not shared by the general public. If you ask the general public, they're saying no to public auto insurance. They said it so clearly, they shook your brothers and sisters in the socialist party to their boots, and they came clean and admitted, "We can't have public auto insurance either."

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Welland-Thorold has two minutes.

**Mr Kormos:** By God, for a few minutes there I thought Mr Stockwell was starting to nod off a little bit,



but something provoked him and got him on a roll. There you go: The member is alive and well.

The problem is that he doesn't want to reflect on the fact that subsequent governments in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and British Columbia, some governments, like that of Bill Vander Zalm, the Socred, with which ideologically — well no. I suspect that Chris Stockwell, the member, would consider Bill Vander Zalm something of a red. Chris Stockwell is that far to the right. But even the Socreds in British Columbia, committed to privatization, as this government very much is, in the destruction of public institutions didn't dare touch public auto insurance.

Mr Stockwell is quite right about the chronology. He is. The Liberals tried to tinker with the product. It didn't address the issue of premium cost. The last government tinkered with the product. It didn't address the issue adequately of premium cost. This government is merely tinkering with the product. It's not going to address the issue of premium cost. We've gone full circle back to the form of insurance that was pre-Bill 68.

**Mr Sampson:** No, we haven't.

**Mr Kormos:** Yes, we have, Mr Sampson. We've gone back to the product that was pre-Bill 68. That's the product that was generating the double-digit premium increases, generating the crisis that caused David Peterson, in a knee-jerk reaction in the crisis of a scrum at the end of an election some time in September 1987 — September 6, if I recall. He said, "We have a very specific plan to reduce auto insurance premiums." Well, they didn't. He was scratching his head all the way back. It ain't gonna work. Trust me on that.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** That was a lively Tuesday night exchange between the members from Etobicoke and Welland.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** We try to put them on different nights for House duty, but it doesn't always work.

**Mr Stockwell:** Too bad you didn't do that at the convention.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Order. The member for Renfrew North has the floor and I would ask the honourable gentleman not to interject, the member for Etobicoke West in particular.

**Mr Conway:** I say to the last interjection from Etobicoke West — I shouldn't do this, but I will — that I watched the weekend convention and I wondered, who got more revenge? Peter Kormos or Elie Martel? Anyway, Bob Rae has gone on to other things.

I don't intend to rethrash the old straw of second reading. I do have some very strong feelings about the insurance question. I think the committee and the presumptive minister, the member for Mississauga West — a lot of good work has been done by people of good intent. I remain sceptical. I don't mean that as a partisan observation. I think the member from Welland is right to point out the several efforts made over the course of the last number of years to fix the problem.

This bill has as its starting point, and as a big part of its *raison d'être*, the revocation of Bill 164. As part of that revocation, there will be a significant, dare I say a

sharp, reduction of accident benefits, for all the reasons that have been given. The putative minister, the man who's got carriage of this bill, the member for Mississauga West, has taken some pains, both in the course of the second reading debate and elsewhere in the province, to talk about what for me is an attractive feature in this policy, Bill 59: the so-called customization of one's automobile insurance and related accoutrements. That I like, personally.

**2010**

There is a restoration of tort. In the absence of our good friend from Willowdale, the minister of justice, let us celebrate on behalf of the Law Society of Upper Canada.

**Mr Stockwell:** There are some Liberal lawyers.

**Mr Conway:** Let it be clearly stated, there are several Liberal lawyers who in the —

**Mr Bradley:** After auto insurance, I wasn't so sure.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order.

**Mr Conway:** Someone once said of imperial Britain that she had no permanent enemies and no permanent friends, just permanent interests. I think that's wise counsel. Not to say anything nasty about my friends of the Ontario bar, I can think of one of my former colleagues now on the bench who made a good living out of tort business in automobile insurance cases.

**Mr Bradley:** Now His Honour.

**Mr Conway:** Now His Honour. The question of rates — well, as politicians, surely we're all sensitive to the first-order importance of rates. The famous "I have a plan" commitment made nine years ago, as I recall it, grew out of a lot of heat about rates.

We are told that Bill 59 will cause a moderation and a reduction in rates. I was saying to the member for Durham East, who is sitting in the chair of the member for Nickel Belt, "Listen, as a consumer, I am not going to be happy with flat-lining, with moderation on rates." Hey, gang, I've been listening to the insurance industry; unlike the member from Welland, I am not here advocating public auto insurance, but I've listened carefully for the last couple of years, and the handwringing I've heard from the big insurers in Ontario about, "Oh, 164 is a nightmare; it's driving costs through the roof."

When they made those submissions to the committee on second reading — I happened to be there on a couple of occasions when they were making the case. I thought it was a case with some merit. I don't denigrate or diminish the efficacy of that argument totally, but I remember it well: "These accident benefits are going to drive costs through the roof."

**Interjection:** And they did.

**Mr Conway:** And, it's been observed, they did. Fair enough. If that is the assessment of people more knowledgeable than myself, I will accept it.

Now, of course, we have an opportunity to see the converse. We are going to reduce substantially, with this policy, the accident benefits. We're going to go from \$1,000 a week to \$400 a week and a number of other reductions. I've got news for my friends, the big insurers, who, if they were to be credited three or four years ago, that it would be these overly generous accident benefits contained in Bill 164 that would be the primary cause of



sharply increased costs — now our friend from Mississauga West, on behalf of Her Majesty's provincial government of Ontario, has taken a sharp turn to reduce the accident benefits. I say to my friend from Mississauga West, now I expect some real action. If Zurich and Dominion and Economical think they can buy my contentment with a 5% or 10% reduction, they are going to be sadly disappointed. I repeat, the bill that is before the House tonight for third reading has as its principal ingredient a sharp reduction of accident benefits. That should surely mean a sharp reduction on the pressure that insurers have been feeling to maintain high rates and substantial premium increases.

Let me say to my friend George Cooke and others in the industry — and the member for St Catharines was, dare I say it, being mischievous, if not worse, when he asked rhetorically of the member from Welland, "Help me to understand the reversal in policy that led to Bill 164 rather than that commitment that was made when Moses brought the tablets down from the mountain millennia ago, from the NDP, the democratic left in civilized society, about public auto insurance." If you haven't read that chapter in Mr Walkom's wonderful book, *Rae Days* — I cited it here the other night. It's something like the "The Pink Ladies Storm the Pink Palace" or some title like that.

**Mr Bradley:** It's now in paperback, by the way.

**Mr Conway:** It's now in paperback. You must be doing well, Tom.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Conway:** Read the book, I say to my friend, who I know has the book. I'm sure Mr Bradley's read the book. There it was clear how the industry, working in concert with leading members of the then administration — I look to the member from the Beach and her colleague from Algoma. There were very interesting, intricate arguments about how public auto insurance did not come to pass and we got Bill 164.

But I say to the industry leadership, don't think for a moment that holding the line on rates and a modest reduction is going to be adequate. I listened carefully to what you said was driving up the costs, and to its credit, or to its intermediate and long-term pain, the now government of Ontario is acceding to the major thrust of the industry a few years ago and accident benefits are being cut sharply.

Tort is back. That's the next argument: "Oh, well, now we've got to keep those reserves as large as they've ever been because the likes of Charlie Harnick and Peter Kormos and" — who else is here? my friend Gerretsen — "these able lawyers in the Legislature and elsewhere will take this bill to court and we'll find some judge who will agree to an expansion of the tort provisions," and on it goes.

I expect that there is going to be, because of the change in accident benefits, a clear reduction of the pressures to keep those rates and premiums as high as they've been. I'm going to watch very carefully, I say to the industry, because you've got most of what you said you wanted. Consumers are not going to be happy with just the status quo. I for one am going to expect that there will be some significant reductions as well as some

creative customization plans worked out over the course of the coming months and years.

**Mr Bradley:** More than 6%.

**Mr Conway:** Oh, 6% I would consider just an introductory offer. I can say that more easily than others because — for the class of 1995, you weren't here to hear the plaintive cries of the industry in 1991-92. You've got to say one thing for Rob Sampson: He listened to the industry, and they are getting much of what they wanted, much of what they said was driving costs up and keeping premiums at such levels.

**Mr Bradley:** Wouldn't you like to be at the fundraiser in Mississauga West?

**Mr Conway:** I'm not going to indulge in that kind of — here it is, chapter 5 from the Walkom book, "Revenge of the Pink Ladies." It's quite a chapter.

I want to say a couple of other things that I think need to be said again about automobile insurance. First of all, it's stating the obvious, but it's mandatory. Any time you make a commodity or a service mandatory, you naturally distort the marketplace, and I think it's unavoidable. I said on the second reading debate that I believe in a market economy, recognizing that it's not perfect and that there are significant oversights and regulatory functions that must be there to keep the market operating responsibly. But we mandate that if you are going to drive a motor vehicle in Ontario, you must, by law, have automobile insurance, and progress has been made over the years to deal with some bad behaviour in the bad old days when people could avoid coverage and many people drove with either no or little insurance and we had that unsatisfied judgement account that you will recall.

**2020**

But we require by law that automobile insurance be mandatory. We make it mandatory. All of us have to remember that. I've got a lot of sympathy for our friend the Minister of Transportation when he says he's going to crack down, in a companion piece of legislation, on some of the miscreant behaviour that's been reported about people driving without insurance.

Obviously, as a member of the Legislature, I want the laws of the land applied and abided by, but I've got to tell you, it galls me to on the one hand mandate this kind of service and then allow some of these insurance companies — and I emphasize "some," because there are a lot of good people in this industry and there are some very good big players, in my estimation. But we have in insurance in Canada, operating in Ontario, some bad people in insurance, people who've behaved outrageously in the last number of years. They have treated people just wretchedly, and they've gotten away with this kind of behaviour because, among other things, it is the law.

One of my main difficulties with Bill 59 is that I do not see in this policy sufficient protection for the consumer. Yes, I know what the lawyers think. I know what the insurers think. I even know what the brokers think. What does the public think? What does the public know? My experience is that a lot of us — and I know, "Let the buyer beware," that caveat emptor injunction, is a wise and good one, but I'm telling you, most reasonable people in this province and country would not in their most wild imaginings conceive that anybody would



behave the way some of these insurers have behaved in recent times.

The Facility, the Farm, the "Bad Persons Club" — I understand what it is and why it's there. But I repeat what I said on second reading. It is disgraceful and despicable the way some people in the industry have treated good people in so far as the Farm is concerned. The member for Mississauga West knows whereof I speak in this respect. There would have been — I'm surprised there hasn't been — a citizens' uprising on the basis of the behaviour of some of those companies in putting —

**Ms Lankin:** There is in Ottawa.

**Mr Conway:** The member from Beaches is right. There has been something of an uprising in Ottawa, Mr Speaker, which you would know from reading the columns of Dave Brown, Brown's Beat, in the Ottawa Citizen. I understand that Mr Brown, like all of us, probably has not got the whole story. I know from my own personal experience and I know from listening to people that there's usually more to the story than you get. But I know this: There are far too many good, law-abiding, well-behaving people who have been thrown into the Farm, into the Facility, for no good reason because of that outrageous internal four-point scheme that the industry developed because they didn't like Bill 164 and they were going to take it out on a whole bunch of unsuspecting customers.

I say to the industry, at least to those in the industry who have been misbehaving around issues like the Facility, that behaviour had better stop. That kind of Star Chamber that has so abused so many good people is unacceptable and intolerable. We have an added duty, it seems to me, as members of the Legislature and as member of the executive council around a service that we legislate to be mandatory.

If it were optional and people had some choice, I perhaps would have a different tone on this. But on this matter, we make it the law — no choice; you must have this insurance. I'm almost embarrassed to say this, but I've met people in my part of Ontario who have been so shabbily treated, ending up paying \$5,000, \$6,000 and \$7,000 worth of additional premium over two or three years, people who are earning \$22,000 or \$25,000 and who in my part of the province don't have the TTC, don't have OC Transpo, don't have Via Rail. They've got a half-ton truck, their only way of going to work, and some jerk in some Toronto- or Montreal- or Winnipeg-based insurance company decides, because of a couple of incidental incidents that don't add up to too bloody much and for which that individual probably has little or no responsibility, in this Star Chamber called the Farm or the Facility, they suddenly find they've now got to cough up an additional \$1,500 in premium revenue for each of the next three or four years.

**Mr Bradley:** Shocking.

**Mr Conway:** It is shocking.

**Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton North):** Stop speeding.

**Mr Conway:** It has nothing to do with speeding at all. I'm not talking about myself, I'm talking about those people — listen, I'm no saint. I am not here to — I've been guilty of my misconduct and I don't expect any

insurer or anybody else to bail me out of my own self-inflicted wounds. That's a kind of a mixed metaphor, I must be getting — but this is no laughing matter. I'm not kidding. I am not kidding. I am surprised that some of the cases that I have seen and have verified — it is scandalous. I just can't believe there is anybody in this so-called free market who thinks you can treat people like this in 1996 and get away with it.

**Mr Bradley:** I read about it in the Ottawa Citizen.

**Mr Conway:** Well, I'm not going to rethrash that, as I said a moment ago.

**Mr Stockwell:** Why don't you get him an eyepatch and sit on his shoulder?

**Mr Conway:** Listen, what is it that Shakespearean scholars tell us, that in Shakespeare it is the fool who tells the essential truth?

I want to add a couple of points quickly. Another area where again good free enterprise capitalists, the brokers — I forget who it was, but earlier in the debate, somebody talked a bit about brokers.

**Mr Bradley:** Frank, defend yourself.

**Mr Conway:** No, I think actually it was the putative minister.

**Mr Sampson:** I'm not puny at all.

**Mr Conway:** It's not puny, it's putative. God, I would not call you, I hope, puny.

**Mr Bradley:** I want Frank Sheehan to defend himself.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order.

**Mr Conway:** Again, I talk to these brokers in my community, in my area of eastern Ontario, and to be fair, they're not unanimous on this, but a surprising number of them have been telling me quietly the way the big boys particularly, the big insurers, have been treating those brokers in the last few years. Oh, and none of it ever announced. It's like Toronto humidity, much more easily felt than seen. No, no, there is no memo, there is no letter, it's just: "You know what, Bradley? You'd better just clean up your act. We don't like your" — you know, you're complaining a little bit on behalf of Customer Lankin or Customer Boushy or whomever. "We just don't really like these complaints and you either better just smarten up or it's cutoff time."

For those of us who believe in a free market, that kind of behaviour, which I can understand, is not very acceptable either — again, around a product that we mandate. I'm not here arguing for public auto insurance. I like the fact that I've got brokers in my community who supply this service and this product. I just assume that they're operating in an environment where they're not going to be faced with that kind of thuggery, that kind of threat, which is real, on the basis of what many of them are telling me — not all of them, to be fair. I want to say to the government that it's very difficult, I know, to deal with that, but if that is the experience of people, then I think we're going to have to at least think about how we're going to contend with it.

Let me just say that I went to the insurance bureau here a few weeks ago. I was so mad about some of what I was hearing and finding, I went to the insurance bureau, and I must say to Stan Griffin and company, they were excellent, they were cordial, they were helpful. I was even more angry when I left because of what they told



me. They gave me some very interesting and useful information. I've been canvassing a whole bunch of people in the last month to find out — and I didn't bring the material that I waved around here —

**Mr Spina:** Did he vote for you for leader?

**Mr Conway:** That has nothing to do with that, I say to the member from Brampton. It has to do with how do we make this market work. One of the very real pressures that will make the market perform more efficiently is public information. I'm down at the insurance bureau and they're telling me, among other things, they've got this wonderful chart that rates all of the vehicles. I'm again repeating myself and you're not supposed to do that on third reading. If I live in Bancroft, or if I'm up in Madoc, I want to know about that information before I go in to buy a car or a vehicle. It is guaranteed that there is nobody in the car business who's going to want to show me that list, because it is a very clear indication that if you buy — and I wish I had it, and I'd better not start to try to remember it, but I'll tell you, those sports cars, how much is the premium on the premium? Wow. Jeep Cherokee is one I remember — and I understand. We all know, apparently, it's the thieves' first choice.

2030

**Mr Sampson:** Mustangs.

**Mr Conway:** I thought Mustang was on the list. Thank you, I say to the member from Mississauga. My constituents —

**Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister without Portfolio [Workers' Compensation Board]):** George really appreciates the comments.

**Mr Conway:** Listen, I'm here talking about consumers. I say to the insurance bureau and to the member for Mississauga West, what are we doing to put that information in the hands of consumers? Are the lawyers happy? Yes. Are the doctors happy? Well, maybe not as happy as they might have been, but you know, those DACs — talk about conflicts of interest. I'm told: "Don't worry. It's going to get better." I'm from Missouri. I can't believe what some of these birds have been up to with DACs in the last couple of years, but I am prepared to give my friend the benefit of the doubt.

**Mr Bradley:** What are DACs?

**Mr Conway:** Designated assessment centres. Again, deal with some flagrant conflicts of interest that just spawn everywhere in this mandated service. But back to information. "This is very interesting," I say to the IBC, the Insurance Bureau of Canada. "How does Mr or Mrs Consumer find out this?" "Oh, well, you know, we've printed up some" — that's interesting. I buy a new North American-made vehicle every year. I have yet to have a car dealer —

**Ms Lankin:** Every year?

**Mr Conway:** When you live in a car, you basically buy a new one every year, if you're as mechanically inept as I am. My point is, I don't expect a car dealer to give me that list.

**Mr Sampson:** They will if you ask.

**Mr Conway:** I didn't even know the thing existed. So I guess what I'm saying is I want there to be — Mr Speaker, you, a man who knows financial services far better than I — I want there to be far more in this policy

than there appears to be to empower the consumer with relevant and useful information. You know, we've got an ombudsman. Whoop-de-do. We've got an insurance ombudsman. I can just see the gang at Zurich saying: "Oh, God, we just better really mind our Ps and Qs. There's an ombudsman down there some place in the bowels of Queen's Park." We've got a multimillion dollar Ombudsman's operation at the — is it still up at the Massey building at the corner of Bloor and Avenue Road? Is it?

**Mr Tony Clement (Brampton South):** Next to Club Monaco.

**Mr Conway:** Wherever. I mean, now that is, despite what we've been told in recent weeks, a relatively significant operation, so I can just imagine under moonlight the plutocrats of the big insurance industry out worried about this ombudsman that's just — well, give me a break. Give me a break.

Again, when I hear from brokers, they're telling me the kind of elbows — it's like going into the corner with Gordie Howe. Consumers won't know that. I did have a bad experience. I go and I actually raise this with the IBC. You know what they tell me? "Who's your company?" I tell them who the company is and they said, "Oh, well, they're not very good these days." I said, "Thank you very much." How the hell am I supposed to know — sorry, how the heck am I supposed to know that? I'm paid 78 grand to know these things, and I didn't know that.

*Laughter.*

**Mr Conway:** Listen, it's not a laughing matter. Some of it would be comical if it weren't so expensive, if it weren't mandatory and if it weren't so bloody important.

**Mr Spina:** If you turn your mike off we'll still hear you.

**Mr Conway:** I want to be heard on this subject.

**The Acting Speaker:** Please address the Chair.

**Mr Conway:** There's another question, I say in response — and the minister of justice is not here. My own personal experience in recent months with the old order is to take nothing for granted; litigate every bloody thing going. If you have any kind of an incident, just litigate, challenge, go to court. Don't take anybody's word for anything, because you will be —

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** Hurt.

**Mr Conway:** Hurt. Not the word I want to use, but I have to be careful. I don't want to see the court system clogged up with minor traffic violations, but I would tell people that under the old four-point plan — and this is, again, what people don't know — no matter how minor, no matter how trivial, you cannot let it pass; you've got to get to court and you've got to fight and you've got to contest. You might have to pay Charlie Harnick a thousand bucks to represent you in court, but better that than end up with a \$5,000 —

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services):** You'll have to pay more than a thousand bucks for Charlie.

**Mr Conway:** Perhaps I understate his tariff, but you'll end up with a far heavier penalty. As I look across at my friend from Hastings, the people we represent live in trucks and cars. To take away their right to drive or to



make it prohibitively expensive, particularly for no good reason, or to create an environment where you almost invite people to break the law and drive without insurance, is not a very happy state of affairs.

In conclusion, while I respect the good work that's been done by a lot of people, I am not convinced that there is adequate protection for the consumer in this package. We need to do more as a government and as a Legislature to make the consumer aware of what his or her real choices are, of what the real options are. We can't leave it to people who have got an obvious vested interest not to disseminate the information. It is obviously not practical to expect an umbrella organization like the Insurance Bureau of Canada to disseminate the information.

I'm not exactly sure what the right mechanism is, but it is with some disappointment that I say that while Bill 59 addresses some concerns positively, I remain unpersuaded on the basis that the consumer is still left out there in a sea of confusion and without the kind of instruments and protections he or she is going to need to do battle with big business in the form of insurance companies, doctors and lawyers and some of the other most specialized and powerful interests in our community and in the economy.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth):** I'd like to say a few words in reply to the address by the member for Renfrew North. I've been involved in the insurance business since 1963. As a matter of fact, I've been in it so long that I remember when we made the decision to make insurance compulsory. That was at a time when we had less than 3% of the drivers in Ontario uninsured. We copied New York, which had between 15% and 17% uninsured even though it was compulsory. My big point is that we're taking a great step forward and we should compliment the parliamentary assistant from Mississauga, whose capable leadership has brought it this far.

Indeed, if I had to make a recommendation, it would be that we should make insurance the same as buying a car, and that is that the marketplace would determine it. We shouldn't have it compulsory but we should have an alternative to that and the insurance industry should compete the same as where you might buy your bread up in Pembroke or something like that. It would seem to me that we don't regulate the price of bread in the store and that we shouldn't regulate the price of insurance. We don't regulate it under this bill directly, but we're putting in so many rules and regulations that in effect that's what it is.

I want to compliment the member for Renfrew North on his speech. I don't agree with it all. As a matter of fact, I thought I heard him say that as a lawyer without a conflict he should recommend that everybody go to court, but I'm sure I didn't hear that either.

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**Mr Stockwell:** The previous speaker pretty much summed up our position, but I'd like to elaborate. There is concern with any piece of legislation you pass. The member for Renfrew North brings it forward and he's probably fairly accurate. Ultimately, at the end of the day we're here to represent the constituents and the taxpaying

public and those people who have to go out and buy insurance because, as he stated so clearly, there is no option. You must have insurance if you're going to drive your car.

The goal of any piece of legislation is to protect the consumers of the province of Ontario. There have been many attempts at this particular piece of legislation that have left something to be desired. I understand about this particular issue that it's one of those where I don't think you're ever going to please all the people involved. The players are too diverse; their issues are too separate. Clearly where we have to line up is on the side of the consumer, the taxpaying public. If you believe in public auto insurance, then you can just do that. If you believe in the private sector, then you've got to strike a balance. To me, this is a balance.

We must be vigilant to ensure that the driving public is aware of the rights, the ramifications and the parameters involved in buying insurance. I have no doubt that there are some extremely unsavoury sorts in the insurance industry in this province, as there are in any other industry we happen to regulate. It's up to us as a government — it's incumbent — to inform those people of their choice and deal very directly with the insurance companies. I don't have any concerns or compunction after passing this bill to go directly to them and tell them specifically, "In certain instances, you've got to clean up your act." You've got to call them into this place and unilaterally deliver that message. As many times as the member from Renfrew can tell me about the concerns he's had, I've got the same concerns in my constituency.

I really hope this works. Given an opportunity, it will work. But not just the teeth of the legislation; we've got to be vigilant in following it up.

**Mr Bradley:** I enjoyed the member's speech very much. He covered a lot of territory that would be valuable for the people of Ontario were they watching this evening. One of the revelations he made that perhaps would not be a surprise to all the insurance men in this governing party, or those who have any expertise in it, or perhaps those in the motor vehicle business, was that he indicated that there's a rating for various cars. What that rating is based on I'm not quite sure; it seemed to be whether they were cars that are most likely to be stolen or cars that are most likely to be involved in an accident. Whatever it is, having information for consumers is always valuable.

I too believe that kind of information should be available to the public and not kept somewhere behind closed doors away from the consumers, so that when a person is making a purchase of a vehicle, that person can determine, among other reasons for making a purchase, just what the situation would be in terms of insurance. The member has been wise as well in pointing out some of the potential pitfalls of this legislation just so the government doesn't feel that perhaps it is going to avoid those pitfalls.

I listened to the member for Mississauga West earlier, who made the pronouncement — always a dangerous one, I've found — that we in the Liberal Party and the NDP would not have to worry about being a subsequent government because we wouldn't be. Boy, do those



words come back to haunt you so often. I remember after the March 19 election Mr Davis used to talk about the realities of March 19; that was 1981. As government changed hands in 1985, I thought, boy, those words came back to haunt him.

**Mr Wildman:** I want to compliment my colleague the member for Renfrew North on his remarks. I always enjoy listening to his perspective as he puts forward his views, particularly as they relate to this piece of legislation, because as has been said by a number of members, there have been a number of attempts over the years to deal with what is an essential commodity that most people in the province must have. All of us know of very difficult circumstances that have faced people who in many cases have been involved in automobile accidents that were not matter-of-fact but led, over a period of years, to significant costs in premium increases, no matter what system we've had in the province.

Some of you will know that in my personal experience it was a very serious situation in my family. The insurance company in that instance was very helpful and responded very quickly to the needs in my family. We appreciated it at the time, as difficult as the situation was. But I know, and this is not a criticism in any way of any of the people involved, that I am still paying, and will pay for many years ahead of now, for the assistance we received when we needed it. It's a very difficult problem.

I think we are going to be, within a year or two, perhaps a little longer, back in this Legislature debating how we should deal with auto insurance. That's not a criticism of what the member has brought forward. I think he's made every effort to respond to the needs of the public in relation to the program of his government. I don't think we have seen the last of this issue.

**The Acting Speaker:** The time has expired. The member for Renfrew North, you have two minutes.

**Mr Conway:** I want to thank my colleagues for their very kind words. I want to say to the member for Perth that while I very much enjoyed his observations, I want there to be no confusion. If I left the impression that I'm a member of the bar or a lawyer, I am not. I am not up to that standard. I want to clarify that.

I want to say to the member for Etobicoke West, I want this to work as well because the member for Algoma, who just sat down, is right: We've been through this mill. We've all had our fingers and our posteriors burnt in the politics of insurance. I want it to work. But we are dealing with a proposition today that makes it possible for insurance companies to make a potful of money. I am not convinced that on the basis of some of the behaviours I've seen, particularly from big insurance companies in the last three or four years, that they can be trusted to do the right and good thing.

If my broker friends are to be believed, if Dave Brown is 10% right in the Ottawa Citizen, then we'd better be very vigilant. I go to the insurance bureau and say: "You know, you're right. We've got to do something here. We need a better consumer something or other." Do we need some kind of a hell-raiser like Ralph Nader to come up here? Maybe that's what we should get. We should get Chris Stockwell or somebody like him to get situated someplace and hound the heck out of these people

who are disposed to be bad. Get the big spotlight of public scrutiny shining regularly on their most egregious misconduct. That's much more likely to work than some elaborate government regulatory framework.

It is important. It is mandatory. It touches everyone in the province. Whether you're a farmer in Beachburg, a retail worker in Pembroke or a logger in Barry's Bay in my area, few things we deal with are more important than automobile insurance. I want it to work, they want it to work, but I'm not sure the consumer is still adequately informed or protected in this policy.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Bradley:** The member for Beaches-Woodbine throws her hands in the air for some reason as I rise. I would like, rather than being here this evening, if I had the opportunity, to be at the special night honouring Douglas J. (Ozzie) Hill, who is being honoured tonight in St Catharines for his many years of service in the field of minor sports, but I am in the Legislature and I'm sure that my constituents would want me to address the issue of automobile insurance, which has plagued so many of them over the years.

First of all, the mention of the horror stories related to premiums is something to behold. I think all of us here have had probably young people mostly — and I don't mean young reckless drivers but people who happen to be young of age — who have found it very expensive to afford automobile insurance. In many cases their employment depends upon their ability to drive and their ability to have appropriate insurance when they are driving. So when the government endeavours to address the issue of premiums, it is zeroing in on something that we all consider to be of great importance.

But also there are those who travel frequently. I think of travelling salespeople who must go from village to village or town to town or city to city who have to pay extremely high premiums, often because the chances of those individuals being caught in violation of the traffic act of Ontario are greater than they are for people who don't drive very frequently. They may well be quite responsible drivers, but from time to time, for instance, may exceed the provincial speed limit on one of the highways when the conditions are favourable to driving, when there appears to be not much traffic on the highway and, in their opinion, it appears to be safe to do so. So those people end up paying higher premiums than they might otherwise have to pay.

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Then there are people who are placed in the Facility or in the category where they have to pay extremely high premiums because regular insurance companies do not want to cover them for anything other than a huge premium increase. As the member for Renfrew North has appropriately pointed out, what happens is, many people get into the Facility not even knowing why because they're not aware of or haven't been informed of the internal evaluation program of insurance companies as it relates to drivers; that is, how many violations a person happens to have.

While we want to ensure that everybody drives as safely as possible in the province, and we want to get the really bad drivers off the road, I go back to the point that



those who have to travel frequently, some of the members of the Legislature from distant places who travel to Toronto, for instance, have to drive more frequently and more miles and for that reason are more inclined to be caught in violation of one of the provincial statutes as it relates to the rules of our highway. That unfairness, the member for Mississauga West, the parliamentary assistant, tells the House, will be addressed by this particular bill. I will wait to see if that is true.

One of the areas where we can see a reduction taking place is the area of fraud. I think where insurance companies have a legitimate complaint and where we can bring down the cost of the insurance premium is if we were to lower the risk of fraud. What happens and what people have to recognize is that the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations and those who worship the idol of deregulation in this province and downsizing must recognize that the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations is going to have fewer people to investigate fraud of this kind and fewer ghost cars, as they're called, to find out who is in violation of the system.

Most of our people who are involved in the automotive repair business are honest and dedicated individuals who would never think of defrauding insurance companies or individuals. But there may be the odd exception out there of people in that business and we have to make sure that that odd exception is looked after.

**Mr Stockwell:** Oh, you mean chop shops.

**Mr Bradley:** I'm getting interventions from the far side. The Speaker will call you to order, no doubt.

I remember the Honourable Frank Drea talking proudly of this. The former Conservative Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, a man of interesting character in this House and a very combative individual, I might say, said on one occasion that the ghost cars would look after those who would defraud the insurance business, insurance companies and cause premiums to rise. What would happen was a vehicle that was damaged would go into a shop that was advertising it looked after these damages and would fix it up. The ghost car of course was in fact an investigator's car and they would determine whether there was any fraud taking place, for instance, whether the first question would be, "Is your insurance company covering this or are you paying it out of your own pocket?"

So when we can overcome those problems, and we can do so only if we have an extensive fleet of fraud cars, or of ghost cars rather, in this province, until we have that regime in place again, we're going to see fraud continue and therefore the cost of premiums rise.

In addition to this, the member for Renfrew North has mentioned certain practices that took place in the medical field in certain establishments that also made the cost go up considerably for the insurance companies. That's where those insurance companies have a legitimate beef: in the field of fraud.

We, as legislators, particularly those of us who believe in regulations when regulations are needed and appropriate staff available in the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations investigations branch, believe that in fact government does have a significant role to play to

protect the consumer, and I think the insurance companies would agree with that.

One of the problems I see with this piece of legislation that is going to be true for all of the Conservative members is a very serious problem. No longer will you be able to have your fund-raisers in those small halls any more. You're now going to have to rent larger halls and you're going to have to have larger bags for the money that you'll be taking out of the fund-raisers because not only will you have —

**Mr Stockwell:** Oh, such a problem.

**Mr Bradley:** The member for Mississauga West suggests, "Such a problem." Not only will you have the lawyers lined up at the door now that you've let them back in the door of insurance with your changes to tort, and that's one group who will be coming to your fund-raisers, but second, you will have the insurance people coming in large numbers because you have satisfied their demands that you lower the payouts to their customers when there is a claim made. So there's a second group that's going to be coming to the fund-raisers. The consumers will not be coming to the fund-raisers unless they were to get the kind of reduction in premiums that could take into account the dramatic increases they've seen in recent years.

Is there anybody else who'll be coming to the fund-raisers? I'm trying to think of some —

*Interjections.*

**Mr Bradley:** Oh, yes, I can understand others. There will be simply the cheerleaders from business at large who think that you've made another step which favours in business over consumers.

**Mr Stockwell:** All the guys there used to be Liberals.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Etobicoke West, order, please.

**Mr Bradley:** I can never hear some of the interjections that come from members. Particularly when the members aren't sitting in their own seats, I find it more difficult than other times.

So I want to sympathize with the problem you're going to have with your fund-raisers. The lineup is going to be a little long. You're going to have to find extra parking and larger halls and more money bags to do this, and that's going to be a real challenge for members of the Reform-Conservative party who sit in the seats of government today.

I think people have to know that their accident benefits have been lowered. Maybe they'll accept that because, as I mentioned in a two-minute response to another member, it's very difficult to have. It's only a magician who can produce this. Perhaps Paul Rhodes, whom I call the magician, would be the person who could produce this, and that is a situation where you have low premiums and you have a significant benefit that's paid out to those who make a claim.

I think, as my colleague for Renfrew North does, that the consumer should have as much knowledge of the product as possible and the premium choices as possible. In the best of all worlds, competition works. In the best of all worlds, the free market should work to produce the best product and the best price. That is the theory. It doesn't always happen that way, and the experience has



been described by the previous speaker in his discussions with the Insurance Bureau of Canada and some of the companies they don't consider are great actors. He did not indicate which they were, but that's an indication clearly that there is still a problem out there in regard to the payouts and to the premiums and to those who have excessive premiums to pay.

I think the government also has a role to play in terms of safety. One of the moves that is made in a previous bill — I commended it earlier today — is to increase the fines for those who are in violation of the traffic act as it relates to trucks. There were other provisions of that bill as well. I think that kind of legislation helps to keep the price down, and we need not less but more of that.

So when I hear people say we need less legislation, less regulation, government out of your face, I have to say that the legislation passed this afternoon by the government in fact suggests more legislation, more regulation and more in-your-face activity on the part of the government, all of it justified in that particular case.

I also want to talk about the fact that insurance is compulsory. The member for Perth indicated again, I guess in the best of all worlds, we could have a situation where there wasn't a compulsory package but that people could purchase the kind of product they needed by paying more than the premium or less than the premium. There's some of that in there. I really wonder if there's ever going to be an alternative to compulsory insurance. But if you have compulsory insurance, as we do, if you have it mandatory, that means there has to be rules and regulations governing the product produced, that being the payout, and the premiums that are charged. With enough competition you always hope that the premiums are going to be lower, but perhaps they will not.

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The other aspect that I want to look at will be the aspect of going to court. The member for Renfrew North was more serious than not when he said that we're going to see a situation where the courts are going to be quite clogged with people who are going to exercise the option to take traffic violation tickets to court. In fact, you're hearing advertising on the radio and television and newspapers now of paralegals and ex-lawyers and so on, people with some expertise. In our area, there's an individual who is an ex-justice of the peace who's in this business. They're going to encourage people to go to court because it's going to pay people to go to court if they could have a violation removed for some reason. In other words, they win the case in court or they could have the penalty reduced perhaps from a violation that calls for four points to a violation that would call for two points; all of this because they want to meet the requirements necessary to keep them out of the Facility or to keep their premiums lower than they might otherwise be.

Mr Harnick, the minister of justice in the province, known as the Attorney General, is already finding a problem with the courts, such a problem that he has indicated he will not be prosecuting on a priority, he and his prosecutors — and there are fewer of them now around because they've laid off a number of prosecutors in the province — but the prosecutors will not be going after people, for instance, breaking into houses or other minor violations unless they feel they have an ironclad case.

When you allow that to happen, that's where often the crime begins, and the crime escalates after that. When a person's involved in petty crime, that person often escalates to another crime. The point I'm making is, the minister's already concerned about how clogged the courts are, so concerned that he is going to look the other way, he and his prosecutors, at a number of crimes that some of us consider to be quite serious and he's going to have to do so even more or hire more prosecutors and more judges, because more people are going to be going to court, if indeed they're going to be forced into Facility by virtue of having violated certain relatively minor traffic act provisions. So that's something we have to take into consideration when we're looking at the total problem of justice in Ontario.

The member for Etobicoke West, as he often does, had a good suggestion about companies coming before perhaps a legislative committee, being, he said, called down to Queen's Park to justify certain of their practices. One of the problems I find with this Legislature — and I don't look at the American system as superior to ours in very many ways; I think ours is superior to theirs. But one way the American system is better is the power of the congressional and legislative committees. You have Senate committees, you have committees of the House of Representatives and then at the state level you have the state legislatures. I guess most states have a state Senate as well. They have committees that actually have some power. When insurance executives, for instance, or others get summoned to those committees, that's a serious matter. The committees are well-staffed, the members of the committee have some prestige and some power and as a result, they're taken seriously.

I don't know whether there's a difference in the partisanship; that probably doesn't matter as much. What does matter is that the committee has some clout. When the member for Etobicoke West suggests that this may be a venue, I think he saw that as a venue, a legislative committee — we used to have one on company law at one time, a select committee on company law — that the insurance executives could be brought in, if indeed we felt that they were being bad actors, and questioned by members of the legislative committee, called to account and asked to answer for what committee members might feel are some indiscretions.

Some in the insurance industry would welcome that opportunity because they could place their arguments and their side before members of the committee. So when the Legislative Assembly committee is looking at many items, instead of trying to penalize the member for Etobicoke West when he's ejected from the Legislature with a fine or worse punishment, perhaps a better option would be, "How can we make the legislative committees more powerful and more meaningful?" Particularly for government members who are not members of the cabinet, this would give them an even more significant role to play in this House, and the opposition members as well. Some — who knows? — at the end of the summer may have a more significant role to play. One never knows when these changes are made by the Premier. But I think all members should have that opportunity through the venue of a legislative committee to have some input into these matters.



We have before us this evening in third reading an opportunity to put a few things on record, to express hope again, because hope is what we need in this matter, hope that you will be successful in this. I had today again and yesterday individuals calling my constituency office asking, "When are we going to see these rate decreases?" I said, "Well, I've seen some of them announced already," it was said as a result of this legislation. There was a press conference called immediately after — governments usually orchestrate these when they've done something that has been favourable to an insurance company or anybody else — and we heard some of the announcements.

Unfortunately, if you've had a 40% or 50% increase in your premiums over the last few years and someone comes and says that they're going to reduce it by 6%, that somehow does not compute, because if the reason for the increase was the infamous Bill 164 of the previous government, to which so many people make reference, then why would we not see dramatic decreases in the premiums? There must be a good reason. That would be why it would be interesting to have those responsible for the setting of premiums before a legislative committee to answer those kinds of questions.

What I think was an advantage in this exercise, I want to say to the parliamentary assistant and to the House, was the consultation that took place before the bill came in. Too often, we do our consulting in government after a bill is struck. I don't know how many changes were made as a result; I presume there were some. I presume the parliamentary assistant and others on the committee felt the input was useful and helpful in developing this legislation, and I think that's a good model to follow. Since the infamous Bill 26, where the government attempted to ram through an omnibus bill changing about 47 acts of the Ontario Legislature all in one bill just before Christmas with a minimum of meaningful hearings — when we had that happen, I think the government learned somewhat of a lesson in how to handle these matters, and that's why when I was critical of that, I'll be equally complimentary of the fact that the government chose a different route in the case of automobile insurance, and that was to have a consultation before the final legislation came forward.

There were some suggestions that there would be further hearings after the bill, but I think the government was able to make a pretty good case, although we always like to see further hearings when you're in opposition, that a lot of the arguments to be made had been made and that further changes to the legislation were unlikely as a result of further hearings. That's why we do not have committee of the whole, where there are further amendments required. That's why it's not going back to a legislative committee again for the summer to have further hearings.

So what is left now is simply to express hope that this will be successful. My friend the member for Lincoln is in the insurance business and he, I hope, made some representations to the member for Mississauga West, because he's had long experience in the business and is very knowledgeable in it and could tell you some of the pitfalls. Frank is in the broker end of things — I think,

Frank, you do some brokering — so he could give you some idea of what different companies do and the policies they follow.

So all of this input is very good for all of us. It makes for better legislation; it makes for better regulations. So I want to tonight not wish you bad luck; I want to wish you well in this, even though there is a vested interest in that should any other party be lucky enough — I don't know whether I should use that term, "lucky enough." Should any other party be blessed with the opportunity to serve in government in the foreseeable future, we hope that you have saved any of us from the difficulty of automobile insurance.

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**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Bert Johnson:** I wanted to respond to the speech by the member for St Catharines. He spoke of hope in it, and I think that's quite an admirable quality because indeed, that's why most of us came to this Legislature.

I did hear with interest his suggestion that our fundraisers will be well looked after. In my riding I have three insurance companies. Blanshard, Downie and Elma Mutual all sell insurance. They're owned by the people in that riding and they sell insurance. I'm sure that if the member for Renfrew North had asked, they'd have given him the chart — I think it was out in Consumer Reports 12 or 15 years ago — about the different rating of cars for the no-fault part of insurance that we don't think of as no-fault but which is the collision coverage.

I also wanted to make a comment, if I could, about the way different governments have treated premiums in the past. I think back to the days when we used to pay an OHIP premium and the premiums went up. I guess they went up so fast that we had a Liberal government, as I recall, that said we had to hide it, so we'll just tax the people and forget that health care costs anything. Indeed, the costs kept going up and going up and they're hiding so far —

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** Universality, Bert.

**Mr Bert Johnson:** Yes. Now we think that health care is free. That is the one reason why I am a proponent of the bill that the member from Mississauga is bringing before us and why I'm glad to be able to speak in favour of it.

**Mr Conway:** I just wanted to say a couple of things. The member for St Catharines raised a good point about fraud. Again, I said in my own remarks on second reading that I've got some real sympathy for the industry on the question of fraud. I remember two or three years ago, I think it was the Insurance Bureau of Canada — I'm not sure, but it was some organization like that — reported ago that their estimate of the fraud in the private insurance world ran at about 15% to 17%. I say that in the presence of the Minister of Community and Social Services because there's been a lot of — and I don't complain about people who worry about the abuse of public insurance programs, welfare and the like, but the IBC reported something like 15% to 17% of all insurance payments in the private sector being fraudulent. Wow.

There's a lot of welfare-bashing going on around this place. I haven't heard too many people up yelling and



screaming about "What the heck are we doing about a 15% to 17% fraud rate, apparently, in the insurance sector?" I don't know whether that figure's been revised downward, but think about that. Every time you pay \$1,000 worth of premium revenue, you are paying about 150 bucks to sponsor criminal or fraudulent behaviour. I don't know whether it offends you people; I'm sure it does. It certainly bugs me. I quite frankly have some real sympathy for the industry. And it's not just consumers, but the number of providers — yes, the number of doctors, the number of lawyers, the number of automobile repair shops — that just cannot resist the corruptibility that comes with insurance that is apparently irresistible.

I guess I say to my friend Bradley on behalf of at least the member for Etobicoke West and myself: Inquiring minds need to know. What would a person pay in 1996 to insure a Roadmaster?

**Mr Frank Sheehan (Lincoln):** God knows what you would pay to insure a Roadmaster; I can tell you that. But the illustration, Jim, you mentioned —

**Mr Bradley:** What about a Porsche, Frank?

**Mr Sheehan:** No, I'm into Cadillacs now. I gave up on Jaguars.

This bill does do a marvellous job of ridding the industry and the public of the problems caused by Bill 164. Bill 164 was a licence to steal. It was an endowment of entitlement to people who had no loss but were entitled to what was just there by mandate. I have to suggest that the member from — Etobicoke, is it? Wherever you're from.

**Mr Sampson:** Mississauga.

**Mr Sheehan:** The member from Mississauga has done an excellent job in drafting this, because every time a question arose, he went and he said, "What is best for the customer?" He always made that question be answered first, before he made a decision as he drew up his law. I think you're going to find it's going to improve customer service, it's going to improve availability, and ultimately it will improve the costs of insurance. I compliment you very much, Rob. You did an excellent job. I hope this thing goes through in nothing flat.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further questions or comments? The member for Etobicoke West.

**Mr Bradley:** Remember, I get the last word.

**Mr Stockwell:** Thanks, Harry.

There were just a couple of comments that I think need to be addressed from the member for St Catharines. I'm not really sure about this party, but I've not seen any huge, long lineup at my fund-raising door from the insurance companies. But I will say this — clearly the member was not here for your speech and is exposing himself once more.

**Mr Kormos:** Start again from the beginning.

**Mr Stockwell:** They're back. Did everything come out okay? Good, that's great.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Stockwell:** I'm doing my best. When my socialist friends come walking in, it's difficult to maintain a balance.

Let me just say this to the member for St Catharines: If there was a group who enticed the insurance industry, if there was a government that seemed to win the accolades and favours of the insurance industry, it had to be

that crowd of Liberals under Mr Peterson that was elected in this place from 1985 to 1990. I know my friend from Renfrew North knows of what I speak. If there was any crowd who simply won the day during that long and arduous debate, the people in the insurance industry did quite nicely under the Liberal regime. I know your affection for the lawyers and the litigators in this province. They did not seem to do quite as well. So if you are speaking about days and periods and fund-raisers where the insurance companies lined up, you speak as someone who seems to know and seems to remember fondly those salad days of the 1980s, when my friend from St Catharines could simply write off a little memo, have a fund-raiser, and the hordes would follow, money flowing out of their pockets.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for St Catharines, two minutes.

**Mr Bradley:** Where does one begin with all these interventions, at the very least?

First of all, I was very pleased the member for Perth raised the issue of OHIP premiums as he did, because I want to tell you that it was a Liberal government which removed one of the largest taxes there was, and that was the tax on individuals for OHIP premium purposes. This was after W. Darcy McKeough, in 1978 I believe it was, increased OHIP premiums by 37.5% in a budget, and he was forced to withdraw them. Because he was in a minority government situation, he had to withdraw that.

Let me tell you what was wrong with OHIP premiums. OHIP premiums you would like, because OHIP premiums do not take into account a person's ability to pay. In other words, a person of modest income had to pay the same OHIP premium as E.P. Taylor, you would have said in those days; now you'd say Trevor Eyton or Conrad Black or one of the very rich people.

**Mr Kormos:** Everyone pays the health tax.

**Mr Bradley:** The member says everybody pays the health tax, but that was then coming out of the income tax, which does take into account a person's ability to pay.

So the problem with OHIP premiums was that people of modest income and the richest people in our society had to pay the same. It didn't take into account the ability to pay. But by financing it through the progressive taxes we had, therefore we were able to make it fairer. I think most members recognize that and were shocked and rolling their eyes as you raised that issue for me.

Second, I'm glad to hear my friend from Lincoln say that he is now into Cadillacs; he's abandoned the Jaguar that could not be found during the election campaign. I'm pleased to hear that. He has some very good points to make. I'm pleased to see that he was complimenting the member for Mississauga West.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate? If not, the parliamentary assistant.

**Mr Sampson:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, but I have no further comments.

**The Acting Speaker:** Mr Eves has moved third reading of Bill 59. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.



**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** Mr Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to defer this vote until tomorrow, immediately after question period.

**The Acting Speaker:** Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** Mr Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to have the motions for second reading of Bills 61, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68 and 69 considered together.

**The Acting Speaker:** Agreed? Agreed.

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GOVERNMENT PROCESS SIMPLIFICATION ACT  
(MINISTRY OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL), 1996  
AND COMPANION LEGISLATION

LOI DE 1996 VISANT À SIMPLIFIER  
LES PROCESSUS GOUVERNEMENTAUX  
AU MINISTÈRE DU PROCUREUR GÉNÉRAL  
ET LES PROJETS DE LOI  
QUI L'ACCOMPAGNENT

Mr Tsubouchi, on behalf of Mr Harnick, Ms Mushinski, Mr Sterling, Mr Saunderson, Mrs Elliott, Mr Wilson, Mr Hodgson and Mr Runciman, moved second reading of the following bills:

Bill 61, An Act to simplify government processes and to improve efficiency in the Ministry of the Attorney General / Projet de loi 61, Loi visant à simplifier les processus gouvernementaux et à améliorer l'efficacité au ministère du Procureur général

Bill 63, An Act to simplify government processes and to improve efficiency in the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / Projet de loi 63, Loi visant à simplifier les processus gouvernementaux et à améliorer l'efficacité au ministère des Affaires civiles, de la Culture et des Loisirs

Bill 64, An Act to simplify government processes and to improve efficiency in the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations / Projet de loi 64, Loi visant à simplifier les processus gouvernementaux et à améliorer l'efficacité au ministère de la Consommation et du Commerce

Bill 65, An Act to simplify government processes and to improve efficiency in the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / Projet de loi 65, Loi visant à simplifier les processus gouvernementaux et à améliorer l'efficacité au ministère du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme

Bill 66, An Act to simplify government processes and to improve efficiency in the Ministry of Environment and Energy / Projet de loi 66, Loi visant à simplifier les processus gouvernementaux et à améliorer l'efficacité au ministère de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie

Bill 67, An Act to simplify government processes and to improve efficiency in the Ministry of Health / Projet de loi 67, Loi visant à simplifier les processus gouvernementaux et à améliorer l'efficacité au ministère de la Santé

Bill 68, An Act to simplify government processes and to improve efficiency in the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines / Projet de loi 68, Loi visant à simplifier les processus gouvernementaux et à améliorer l'efficacité au ministère du Développement du Nord et des Mines

Bill 69, An Act to simplify government processes and to improve efficiency in the Ministry of the Solicitor General and the Ministry of Correctional Services / Projet de loi 69, Loi visant à simplifier les processus gouvernementaux et à améliorer l'efficacité au ministère du Solliciteur général et au ministère des Services correctionnels.

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Community and Social Services):** Amendments to these acts have come about following the establishment of the Red Tape Review Commission under the leadership of my colleague the member for Lincoln, Frank Sheehan. He and his committee of government MPPs have done an outstanding job in working with the various ministries to identify redundant regulations and to recommend action to remove unnecessary barriers for business.

As members of this House know, the Common Sense Revolution, supported by a number of studies, indicated that the regulatory burden is one of the biggest barriers to economic growth and job creation. The Red Tape Review Commission was established to act as a catalyst to encourage ministries to review their laws, regulations and directives and to identify areas of overregulation that led to an unnecessary burden on business and, in many cases, have just outlived their usefulness.

The amendments we are discussing today are just a first effort by our government to simplify bureaucratic processes and eliminate red tape. We will be bringing forward additional measures later this fall, along with a test to help ensure any new laws and regulations are not barriers to economic growth and job creation. This is what will be called the Less Paper/More Jobs test that was outlined in the interim report of the Red Tape Review Commission released on June 5, 1996.

Let me briefly outline a few of the regulatory redundancies that will be washed away through the Government Process Simplification Act.

In the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations, we will amend the Motor Vehicle Repair Act to eliminate reference to regional ministry offices in signage, repair orders and invoices relating to the size, form and style of signs. These regional offices were closed by the previous government; therefore, this is a classic case of a redundant regulation.

Through the Ministry of the Attorney General, amendments relating to the public guardian and trustee will allow discretion to waive the requirement for an authenticated copy of letters probate or letters of administration before releasing property to heirs and personal representatives. This will save people money for having to apply to court for probate and administration.

In the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism, amendments will be made to the Historical Parks Act, the Ontario Place Corporation Act, the St Clair Parkway Commission Act and the Tourism Act to simplify the process for setting fees and prescribing forms. Presently the legislation requires that fees and forms be set by regulations.

In Bill 67, the Ministry of Health proposes 19 health-related amendments that will reduce red tape by eliminating the requirement for cabinet approval for routine decisions by institutions; repealing obsolete and redundant



statutes; and getting rid of unnecessary regulation-making powers over administrative fees and special forms.

A positive attack on government overregulation saves tax money, makes government more efficient and improves services to customers of government services.

At the same time as we are taking action to fulfil promises made in the Common Sense Revolution, the government, the Red Tape Review Commission and the ministries are careful to protect the health, environment, safety and consumer rights of the people of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Questions or comments? Further debate?

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I see that I have an hour and a half to speak this evening on this bill. I do not want to spend that amount of time on this legislation tonight.

*Applause.*

**Mr Bradley:** That has evoked a round of applause, I might note, from the government benches. I can certainly understand why.

I will try as well as I can to speak to the actual provisions of these bills as opposed to anything else, but of course on second reading, approval in principle, we have to look at the total picture, the context in which this legislation is being proposed.

If you look at this legislation, I don't think, for those who follow ancient history, we can call these draconian changes as I look through them. Some of them are probably supportable in the context of 1996.

What I ask the government when it's going through the process of deregulation and delegislation, if there is such a word, is that you look carefully to see that what you're doing is not going to have the kind of ramification that will hurt the population at large later on.

There are some regulations and provisions that I see before every government that need changing. Some of them are simply outdated. When you get regulations that were struck originally in, say, the late 1890s and they're still on the books, and we've had technological changes or other changes that do not necessitate the continued existence and following of those regulations, then it makes sense to get rid of them. Other governments have done this from time to time.

They have not had the communications plan that this government has. My good friend the member for Lincoln, who was the chair of a committee which was involved with red tape, had a press conference — and there were some stories in the newspapers and on television — about some of the changes that would be forthcoming.

I want to commend again Paul Rhodes, the chief — well, he would be complimented if I called him a spin doctor, because in his world it is a compliment to say that. Paul's a good friend of many of us in this House. He covered the House previously as a reporter. His dad was the member for Sault Ste Marie at one time.

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** A good Liberal once.

**Mr Bradley:** A good Liberal at one occasion, before he ran as a Conservative. John Rhodes one of the best-liked members of the Ontario Legislature when he was here.

I compliment Paul on the work he's doing. I hope the government gives him a raise for the fine work he is

doing in terms of putting forth the government position in the best possible light and orchestrating these matters as they might be.

To my friend the member for Lincoln, I had expected worse when I heard of the press conference, I had expected worse from our point of view when I saw the legislation, but what I see before us this evening is not as drastic as I had anticipated, and for that reason I will not find it necessary to speak for an hour and a half on the matters contained within this bill. But what I want to express concern about is that this may be just the first step towards more drastic and draconian legislation.

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**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth):** No, trust us.

**Mr Bradley:** I'm asked to trust the government on this. I think I will be careful and cautious and look carefully at each piece of legislation that is brought forward.

One of the reasons we have a lot of legislation and regulations is to protect the people or the consumer. When I see changes that are made to various regulations affecting consumers, I become concerned that they will be at the mercy of unscrupulous people in the business community.

Again, there are two sets of people you must deal with: the consumers themselves, who must be protected; but every bit as important, the good business people out there, who must be protected from competition from those who are going to make an extra buck by breaking the rules.

I always see the fact that there may be many in the business community who from time to time applaud government for bringing in new regulations, though I know of many, particularly in the small business field, who are happy to see some of the regulations removed. They have demonstrated to me some of the ones that seem to be redundant, seem to be unnecessary; and in that case, when the government removes those, I'm quite delighted to see that happen.

I don't want to condemn carte blanche the government in this matter. But I saw a step that the government was taking the other day that gets into downsizing to a certain extent; I'll interpret it as deregulation. The St Catharines Standard, I see, agrees with me today, though when I mentioned this in the House I did not see my name in the Standard after that, because I think there had been a dog killed on Scott Street that day or someone dropped a nickel.

Anyway, my friend the member for Lincoln knows of which I speak, because he has looked for his name many times in the Standard, has found it when he doesn't want to find it, but when he makes a pronouncement that he feels is of significance to his constituents he looks for it, but, as I say, sometimes there are other matters that take precedence.

But I'm saying today I compliment the editorial writer of the St Catharines Standard who spots one of the measures which I call deregulation and which is downsizing, and it's what you have to be careful of; not so much what you might find actually in this bill, but what this bill leads to. Let me share with members of the House the contents of this editorial. It doesn't say, "Standard Agrees with Bradley"; it says, "Ducking a Duty."



"The Ontario government has taken its obsession with deregulation a step further with plans to eliminate a number of inspectors who gather Ontario produce for pesticide tests.

"Sixteen of 20 horticultural inspectors — who regularly visit markets or food stores to grade produce and gather samples for testing — will be laid off to save money. The pesticide checks cover 200 different chemicals and have been conducted for about 20 years. The information allows the government to monitor trends in pesticide use and programs to help farmers reduce their dependence on chemicals.

"In the wake of the announcement, Agriculture Minister Noble Villeneuve assured consumers everything would be all right and they shouldn't worry about chemical contaminants in their food. If they have concerns, he said, all they have to do is send in samples for testing.

"In a letter of 'clarification' — published on this page today" — and this is in today's St Catharines Standard, which is the 25 June 1996 edition of the Standard — " — the minister insists samples will continue to be collected. But this does not inspire confidence. Clearly, with the reduction in staff, the frequency of random sampling and tests will be greatly reduced.

"And Villeneuve's suggestion that the public send in their own samples is silly for a number of reasons. According to officials at the agriculture ministry, it costs between \$250 and \$1,000 to test a sample of food, a bill far beyond the means of the average consumer. Who will pay? People simply won't rush to shell out hundreds of dollars every time a tomato tastes odd.

"Then there are problems with timing. Fresh produce sent to the ministry by mail or other means would not be in any condition for proper testing by the time it was received.

"The Harris government is constantly telling its constituents that it has a mandate from voters to get government out of their face. But at no time did voters demand a reduction in steps to protect health and safety, whether in the workplace or in the produce we consume.

"It should not be the job of consumers, with no expertise in such matters, to be on guard against toxic chemicals in what they eat. This is a duty which government should not shirk."

What the St Catharines Standard editorial writer points out is an example of what happens when governments move before they think carefully about the ramifications of that move. There are two sets of people in this case, for instance, who are going to be concerned: first, the consumers who eat the food; and second, farmers in our province, who could say, I think, with some authority that our food is safe, it has been in the past, it is at present, before we lose these inspectors, and they can say, "If you don't believe us, we have objective inspectors from the government who carry out these inspections and send in reports."

That gives the consumer confidence, and that's why a lot of us, some for other reasons as well, choose Ontario products, because we know these kinds of inspections have taken place. We know we've got inspectors on the job. We know that the number of random samples taken will be rather significant. So I think farmers and con-

sumers have both benefited from this program. But this is what happens when governments start to worship at the idol of deregulation and, as they said in the editorial, of getting government out of people's faces.

I caution you, on what is contained in this bill, some of them are quite minor and you're not going to see a lot of objection to them, though I must say, if you look carefully at the bill, the bill allows the government now to set some significant new fees. The eight government process simplification bills have less to do with reducing red tape, in this case for business and consumers, and more to do with providing new powers to implement fees and give new powers to cabinet ministers.

The eight bills allow new or enhanced fee-setting powers under 20 statutes. So while the government will claim that it wants to reduce the tax burden on the people, and I understand that, on the other hand, through the other door, it will be increasing a lot of these taxes.

When the government likes to talk about past tax increases, it lists how many the NDP brought in or the Liberals brought in; I calculated 173 the Conservatives brought in. They list the numbers, but what they often don't list are the fee increases, which in fact are selective tax increases. When you look at this bill, that's what it allows the government to do. Under what authority? Under the authority of individual cabinet ministers.

Members of the government caucus will show up one day, on a Tuesday morning, surprised because they've had some telephone calls from constituents, either in the business community or in the consuming community, who will say, "Did you understand there's been a drastic increase in this fee?" Members will be surprised that this has happened, because the cabinet will have done it behind closed doors and perhaps forgotten to inform the members, because it will be done by regulation in this case, not by legislation.

What they're doing further is shutting individual members of the government out of the process. More power to the crowd that advises the Premier, the unelected people who are much smarter than any one of us in this House; and more power to the civil service, who will make recommendations to the government on how it can obtain further revenue; and less power to those of you who were elected, regardless of what your party happens to be but are popularly elected in your individual constituencies. Again, this is a trend which I think all of us who are legislators should be concerned about.

When I look at deregulation, not all of it is bad; some of it should be done. Sometimes, for instance, the private sector can do a better job than the public sector. Sometimes self-regulation may be every bit as good as government regulation, but on many occasions that's not the case. I suggest that you canvass opinions rather widely, not necessarily of vested interest groups, but opinions of informed and experienced people before you embark further down the road of deregulation.

I notice for instance that under economic development, trade and tourism, there are changes to four acts under the ministry.

The Historical Parks Act gives the minister sweeping powers to set new fees for such facilities as Old Fort William and Sainte-Marie Among the Hurons.



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The Ontario Place Corporation Act gives the Ontario Place Corp, with the approval of the minister, of course, sweeping powers to set new fees.

The St Clair Parkway Commission Act gives the St Clair Parkway Commission, with the approval of the minister, sweeping powers to set new fees.

The Tourism Act gives the minister sweeping powers to set new fees and allows the minister to deny permits unless permit fees have been paid.

That's just an example of part of this legislation that allows for the government to set new fees. Not all of you in the government; I can't stand up in the House and say it's the member for Durham East's fault, because he doesn't sit in the cabinet, though, heaven knows, with the shuffle that may take place, he may well be. Any of the Durham members in that area — Durham East, Durham Centre, Durham West — I can't blame you, unless of course you're elevated to the cabinet when the shuffle takes place this summer and when we base the choice of the members of the cabinet on competence. With that in mind, I know there are many who sit in the back benches who feel they would qualify for elevation to the cabinet.

But I can't blame you. The only time I can blame you is if you stand in this House and support this bill. I will remind you when those fees go up that you supported a bill — not that you wanted those fee increases, but that you supported a bill which allowed the cabinet and individual cabinet ministers to jack those fees up rather considerably. Again, the member for Etobicoke-Humber would be disappointed if I did not bring this matter to his attention, but these fees will not take into account a person's ability to pay.

Should Trevor Eyton show up at Old Fort William, it'll be much easier for him to pay that additional fee than it would were a person of more modest income, the chief government whip for instance, to show up there and be asked to pay more of a fee. In the interests of the chief government whip, the member for York Mills, I'm concerned for him and for others whom he represents, because those fees will increase. He will not have had input into it. Even though he's the chief government whip, they don't let him in behind the closed doors of the cabinet to have input in those fee increases. Mark my words, you will see the increases as a result of this bill and you'll see them after they've been implemented rather than before.

Bill 68, one of the bills we're debating tonight — and we as an opposition wanted to be so cooperative and ensure the government could debate eight bills at one time. You might say it's omnibus, but these are of minor consequence in the total picture and we also wanted to be cooperative with the members of the government who are eager to see this legislation passed, at least to second reading.

I looked at the northern development and mines provision, Bill 68 amends the Mining Act to eliminate the Mining Act licensing requirements for refineries processing gold, silver and other precious metals. Is this a good thing? Hard to say. I'm a little bit suspicious that perhaps they're relinquishing some control. The licensing requirements for refineries must have had something to do with

how the refineries operate and therefore government, acting on behalf of the people of the province at large, probably had a role to play. I hope I'm wrong in this. I hope it's a more minor provision and it's of little consequence.

Bill 69, Solicitor General: It says Bill 69 amends five acts administered by the Solicitor General and corrections minister. Most of these amendments will transfer regulatory powers away from the Lieutenant Governor in Council, which are order-in-council appointments, to the minister. Let me tell you, even though you're best off as members of the Legislature to have input, better to have the whole cabinet than the minister alone be responsible for these regulatory powers, because at least you might run into a cabinet minister in the hallway and say, "What's cooking today?" and even though there's cabinet secrecy, that cabinet minister may, if it's not a matter of great consequence, talk about something that might be happening in the mining industry, for instance, or in the corrections ministry. But what you're doing is taking away from the cabinet at large, order in council, and giving it to one individual.

Having sat in the cabinet, I know that one of the most interesting times for cabinet ministers is to sit and go over the orders in council, because each minister brings them forward. Each minister may have a personal agenda. Even more significant, the civil service in that ministry may have an agenda that they want the minister to advance.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** No, that never happened.

**Mr Bradley:** The member for Beaches-Woodbine suggests that never happened. Tongue-in-cheek, I see she suggests that.

What I want to warn you of is, if you have the whole cabinet observing these orders in council, looking at them carefully, one of the ministers might say: "I think we'd better doublecheck this. We might check with the member for Etobicoke-Humber, who's expert in this field, because he may have some interesting input, or my friend the member for Niagara Falls may have some expertise in the field. Perhaps we should remove this order in council and consult with the member for Niagara Falls." Instead you're simply going to have a minister with those powers and that minister or the minister's civil service or political advisers may have an agenda which is not an agenda accepted by the entire cabinet and the entire government.

Oftentimes when you look at these bills they look innocent, but when you look at the possible ramifications once the bill is passed and you have no more input, you find out that perhaps the minister should come to caucus and be forthright about all the potential problems with a bill of this kind. I say that because I count on the members of the government who are not in the cabinet as well to scrutinize these matters. Often they're in better touch with their constituents, not because the cabinet ministers don't want to be but because other members are not as consumed in the day-to-day operations of a ministry and sometimes have a better feel for what the constituents are saying.

There's a need for a warrant to transfer inmates from one correctional institution to another. It's eliminated by



Bill 69. I don't know if that makes any difference. It doesn't seem to me to make much difference. It seems to be supportable. Someone may say: "Do you know what you're talking about on this? This has major ramifications." I don't see them in this.

**Ms Lankin:** What about Bluewater to Elgin-Middlesex?

**Mr Bradley:** But just when you happen to think that, the member for Beaches-Woodbine intervenes to say, "What about the transfer that took place from Bluewater to Elgin-Middlesex?" and the controversy that's been raging in the House for the last few weeks as a result of that. So maybe that is significant. If you look at it on the surface you say, "It doesn't look like it's that important," but then when you have an incident such as we had that's been the subject of questions in the House for the last few weeks, you say perhaps that's not as wise as you might think.

I don't want to go through each one of these, except I do want to say — and there may be another member speaking on this briefly — that the Minister of Health will have new powers. It says: "Proposed changes to 10 acts revoke the power of the Lieutenant Governor in Council to approve applications, forms and bylaws to prescribe fees. Bill 67 transfers these powers to the minister." I won't get into the details of those. I think the member for Renfrew may be dealing with the Ministry of Health aspects. But look at it again. You're taking it away from the cabinet as a whole. Not only do you have no say, as members of the caucus, but you've taken it away from the cabinet and put it in the hands of the minister. That's only the opinion of the minister, the minister's political advisers, the political staff that all ministers have, and the civil service in the Ministry of Health. No other minister has any input and no member of the caucus has input.

So again when you look at this bill, read it carefully. One of the interesting things to do — sometimes they're hard to understand for me. I'm not a lawyer and there's legalese in some of the legislation, but I have to go through it and if I don't know what it's about I'll ask somebody who does, maybe a lawyer who understands legalese or someone expert in the field, to say, "What are we getting into with this legislation?"

I could go down the list but, as I say, I don't want to dwell unnecessarily on a lot of the aspects of this legislation except to say that regulations aren't all bad. Some of them are not necessary, some of them should be amended, some of them should be cast out. Many of them should be retained for the protection of the consumer, for the protection of the environment, for the protection of people at large, for the protection of business. When I say business — good corporate citizens who live up to their obligations and hope that government will ensure that their competitors, who may not be such good corporate citizens, are required to live up to the same obligations in a variety of ministries and a variety of fields.

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As this goes out to committee this summer — the opposition has asked that this go out to committee — I hope those who have concerns or who support it will

come before the committee to say why it's supportable, why it's advisable, or where it should be changed and where it should be altered considerably. The government's going to proceed with this — I don't think there's a hope that the bill's going to be abandoned — so I hope the committee hearing process will simply change the bill in areas it needs changing so that it's a better piece of legislation, of which all members of this Legislature can be justifiably proud.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Questions or comments?

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** I'm very pleased to be able to participate in this short response to the member for St Catharines. My duty is to inform the people who may be night-owls and watching tonight on two bills. All of the small group of eight bills are to clear the road or clear the path to allow people to get on with their lives and get on with their business.

Bill 68 really deals with some minor amendments and repeals the land act, the Canada Company's Lands Act, 1922, which deals with minor changes and really affects those people who are applying to get clear title to property. This was the way it was done in 1922, but now someone who may own that land has a legal difficulty which is completely unnecessary. We're eliminating that barrier or that piece of red tape.

Bill 69 rolls together five acts. One of those regulations deals with private investigators and security guards. The way the current regulation reads, those two groups' licences all expire on the same date, which creates an unusual, unplanned-for bulge of work for which the ministry of course has to man up on a temporary basis. All we're doing is staggering the licensing times. That's the way to do business today. Certainly I think it's going to help small business and it's something I know people in my riding of Durham East will very much support.

Also, there was some small discussion on the removal warrant. Well, I'd be surprised if we had to resort to a primitive methodology in today's world of electronics. I'm sure all our correctional facilities are linked electronically, certainly they should be, for security and for information purposes. Wouldn't it be most appropriate to electronically advise the other facility that these things are happening and these inmates' records and those kinds of things — I think what we're doing with that is eliminating the red tape.

**Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre):** It gives me great pleasure to respond to the member for St Catharines this evening. I know he kept his comments brief and didn't get a chance to talk on all of the bills tonight.

I know he wanted to mention the section in Bill 61 that eases the requirements imposed on charitable organizations, trust companies and individuals who deal with the public guardian and trustee. For example, we no longer require executors and trustees to give the public guardian and trustee notice by registered mail or personal service of bequests for religious, education or charitable purposes.

I know the member, if he had more time, would also want to mention that the bill simplifies the procedures the public guardian and trustee must follow to get the authority to sell real estate, and in some cases that they



actually continue to act as an administrator, and that the bill will also facilitate speedier and less costly transfer of assets to beneficiaries from the public guardian and trustee. In fact, in estates of under \$20,000 the public guardian and trustee's discretion will waive the requirement for the authenticated copy of letters probate or letters of administration before releasing property to heirs and personal representatives. This will save people from having to apply to court for probate or administration.

An amendment to the Statutory Powers Procedure Act will clarify the details of the basic procedural rules that apply to over 70 Ontario tribunals. This will enhance the efficiency in the hearings process for businesses and individuals and for tribunals themselves.

There are also changes in relation to the Assessment Review Board. All of these changes are simple procedural amendments that will improve the boards' ability to provide better service and make more efficient use of the boards' hearing time.

**Ms Lankin:** I'm actually going to respond to the member for St Catharines. As he indicated, there are eight bills in front of us here tonight, many of them with rather minor administrative sorts of changes. But you know, when you've got a package like this together, even if it's a small package, if you look inside you can often find a gem. The gems we find in here in terms of this government giving powers to its ministers to increase taxation on the public of Ontario is quite an incredible gem from a government that says it's not going to increase taxes, from a government that says a user fee is just a tax by any other name.

Let me just give you an example. Under the public guardian and trustee, the bill gives the minister the right and restores the guardian's office's right to charge fees for services performed.

Under economic development and trade, and the member responded to this one, new fees can be charged by the minister without going to cabinet for the Historical Parks Act, the St Clair Parkway Commission Act and other attractions of that sort.

What I found interesting was under the Ministry of Health legislation, Bill 67: Ambulance Act, ministerial power to establish fees is added; Charitable Institutions Act transfers the power establishing fees from the cabinet to the minister; Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act transfers the powers of establishing fees from the cabinet to the minister; Health Protection and Promotion Act, same thing, the minister gets to set fees; Homemakers and Nurses Services Act, the minister gets to set new fees; Homes for Special Care Act, the minister gets to set new fees; Private Hospitals Act, the minister gets to set new fees.

What about under the Coroners Act? There you can again have the minister set new fees. What about under the Ministry of Correctional Services Act? The bill allows the minister to impose and collect new fees. I'll tell you, this is a cash grab by any other name, but it's just wonderful to see the Tories come to the reality of governing in these days and realize that with VLTs and everything else, they really do need money.

**Mr Jim Flaherty (Durham Centre):** I'm pleased to respond to the comments by the member for St

Catharines, specifically with respect to the Government Process Simplification Act (Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations), 1996, which amends three acts administered by the ministry.

First of all, the Motor Vehicle Repair Act will be amended to eliminate reference to regional ministry offices in signage, repair orders and invoices, and the regulation-making power concerning size, form and style of signs.

Secondly, the Motor Vehicle Dealers Act will be amended to eliminate the regulation-making power requiring registered motor vehicle dealers to be bonded. The bonding requirements are no longer necessary, thanks to the existence of the motor vehicle dealers compensation fund.

Thirdly, the Consumer Protection Act is amended to eliminate the registration requirement for itinerant sellers. I would like to assure this House that itinerant sellers, while no longer required to be registered with the ministry, will still be required to fully comply with the provisions of the ministry's Business Practices Act and Consumer Protection Act.

I'm proud to take part in the streamlining of our administration with the introduction of this act at the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations.

2200

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for St Catharines may sum up.

**Mr Bradley:** I'm pleased that the members of the government were able to get on the record their support for certain aspects of the legislation. As I expect they would, I know they'll be happy, now they have roundly endorsed this legislation, to receive all the telephone calls when there are fee increases. I think you could legitimately change the name of the bill to, "These bills are designed to raise fees to consumers and others in the province of Ontario," because that is one of the major provisions.

I appreciate the member for Scarborough Centre, the member for Durham East and the member for Durham Centre all helping us out with clarifications of the bill. They were perhaps areas I had left out and their clarification may help the public to be more supportive of those particular aspects. But I think the public will recall that this bill transfers more power from a wider circle of people to one person — that is, the minister in most cases — and that this bill really enhances the opportunity for individual ministers to invoke fee increases which are, in effect, tax increases on the consumers of this province and perhaps on businesses in this province.

I well recall our friend the Premier of this province, when he made a speech that said user fees are the same as taxes: you can't differentiate between user fees and taxes. I think I applauded the day he said that, rather enthusiastically, because I agreed with him, and yet what this legislation will permit now will be significant and unscrutinized fee increases in a variety of fields and those fee increases will not take into account a person's ability to pay.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** Speaker, I want you to know that I appreciate the opportunity tonight to



speak on these many bills in this House before us tonight and to follow on the comments of the member for St Catharines and to say to you that these bills, however impressive by way of their number and the various ministries that they flow out of and will have some impact in, really are much ado about nothing. There's really not a whole lot here. It's just another example of this government's game of shells, this game of flim-flam, of one day declaring that there's a crisis and the next day coming in with all kinds of draconian new ways of hurting people, cutting services, reducing government's influence in this province and diminishing that which we all hold in common and value, that which gives dignity to people and contributes to their quality of life.

We have here a series of bills that flow out of a very grandiose process of discussion led by several parliamentary assistants to rid this province of red tape once and for all, that was presented to us as that which was stopping the economy of this province from growing or moving forward, stopping the business sector from getting on the freeway of recovery, stopping people from investing in this province. We were all, I think, waiting with bated breath, with great anticipation, the final arrival of this package in this place so that we could see for ourselves in Technicolor the breadth and the depth of the red tape that people who want to do business in this province, particularly as the government would present it, are having to deal with, and this is what we have here today.

I want the government to know, and the members across the way of goodwill, and there are a goodly number of them — a goodly number of members in this House who were elected by people from across the province under the banner of the Progressive Conservative Party who, I believe, do have the best interests of their constituents at heart and are working as much as they can within the caucus to make sure that things that happen are in fact done for that very reason. I appeal to them tonight to please be forthright with us, be honest with us and tell us that what we have here, again, is another attempt to distract the people from focusing on that which is real re the question of how we develop an economy in this province that is viable and vital and alive and which generates the wealth that is needed to provide all of us — all of our friends and neighbours, all of our colleagues and family members in the communities that we come from — with the kinds of jobs that we all aspire to, which have decent wages attached, which have benefit packages, which have a pension plan that we can look forward to once we retire and move into our old age.

I suggest to our Speaker tonight that this package of legislation that we have in front of us, this red tape removal applicant that we have here is not going to go any distance to doing that. We will not see created, because of this package of legislation in this province, one more job. We will not see one more person taken off the welfare rolls. We will not see the ability of one more hospital in any of our communities enhanced so that it can offer more and better service. This piece of legislation will not do that.

As a matter of fact, in many ways, what we have here in this is simply a cleaning up, a tidying up, a house-

keeping of initiatives that we started when we were in government. It has nothing to do whatsoever with the exercise that this government has paid for over the last few months, has sent its parliamentary assistants out and about talking to people about. It has nothing to do with that whatsoever. So it, as so much of what has been presented in this House, is another huge disappointment.

But the people will not be fooled, just as they weren't fooled on that infamous day in July 1995 when we all woke up to discover that, yes, as one of the government members said the other day in this House, Ontario had changed, Ontario had indeed become meaner and greedier. We woke up to the reality that now those who lived in our neighbourhoods and in our communities who are most in need, who are most vulnerable and who have been battered around by the system in such a way as to not have a job any more, are going to lose 21.6% of their income, that money which they used to put bread on the table for their children, that money which they used to put a house over their heads, that money which they used to clothe themselves and their offspring in the very cold winters we experience in this province and in this country.

We were led to believe by the information and the package and the context within which that was delivered that this was going to be good news for this province, that somehow by taking 21.6% out of the income of the most vulnerable and the poorest among us we were all going to be better off, that a year or two or three years down the road this magic elixir of a reduction in the services and the money that those among us who are most in need were getting was somehow going to make this province stronger.

Just as — I forget what the exact date was but that other infamous date, and there were many of them in 1995 and indeed in 1996 and there will be more — when the Minister of Education said that he was going to create a crisis, we all know in hindsight now that in fact he did create a crisis; and that by taking \$400 million out of education in one half of the school year and extrapolating it over a full year, we're looking at \$1 billion out of the education system. We're told, with the context within which that was delivered and with the information that attended it and came with it, that somehow with this slashing of education, this diminishing of the resources that go to education, we were all going to be better, that this province of ours with this streamlined, downsized education system was going to be healthier and was going to be more attractive to outside investors, and the economy would get better, we would all have jobs, and everybody would be ready to participate.

2210

But I tell you that the people out there will not be fooled; they're not fools. They've been around too long, they've been working too hard and they understand only too well the reality of the agenda of this government and how, even though it is packaged to make us all believe it is good news, in the end it is bad news. Once it begins to touch each one of us, each one of our friends and neighbours out there, we will begin to realize ever more clearly, and ever more personally, the reality of that truth.

We're told in Ontario that a diminishing of public services, a reduction of government, getting government



out of the lives of people, the freezing of the minimum wage so that it becomes eventually one of the lowest in the country will somehow be more attractive to investment and to a healthier business climate in this province, just as we're told in the bills we're debating here this evening that the removal of the so-called red tape, which is very minuscule if you go through the documents that come with these bills, will somehow be better for all of us and will create a climate in this province that will be supportive of new industry, of new enterprises of a business nature. We know that won't happen.

In this province what we're competing with out there in the world as the economy becomes more and more global are workplaces that are dependent on child labour, on the lowest of minimum wages, on the lowest of regulation where it comes to health and safety and concern for the environment. That's what we're competing with.

To suggest for a second that somehow to be meaner and leaner and less concerned about those things that over the years in this province we have learned we need to be concerned about — things like the environment and the health and safety of workers in the workplace and the fact that they get a good wage so that they can provide for themselves and for their families, the fact that they have a benefit package that helps them take care of some of the medical needs we all incur, the fact that we as a government come together and pool our resources so that we can have a health care system that's second to none in the world, the fact that we come together and pool our resources so that we can have an education system that is universally accessible to everybody, so that every family in this province is confident that when their children come to an age where they need to go to school they can go to school and go to the same school that their friends' and neighbours' children are going to regardless of their economic means — for us to entertain for a second the thought of diminishing that very valuable foundation upon which everything else is built in this province so that we can compete with nations that use child labour so that they can manufacture and ultimately sell a product in our jurisdiction and in other jurisdictions across the world that is cheaper is to give in to the basest of human greed, to give in to the most base of human aspirations and not to in any way contribute to a world that is supportive of people, to a world that is dignified and caring of human beings.

The people out there will not be fooled. They understand the impact all of this will have on them. In Sault Ste Marie, the lovely community I come from, when we were government all kinds of really exciting and innovative things were done to restructure industries that were struggling. It wasn't a question of removing red tape. It was a question of government giving leadership. It was a question of government taking the major players in the instance of Algoma Steel and St Marys Paper and the Algoma Central Railway and so many other business enterprises in Sault Ste Marie that found themselves in dire straits in those very difficult times when the recession of the early 1990s was coming at us, a recession that we all know was probably the deepest and most difficult to deal with since the Great Depression.

The government of Bob Rae didn't say in Sault Ste Marie, "There's just too much red tape here and we have a whole lot of other things to do before we get to that." We brought all of the players to the table and we restructured those companies in a way that sees them today ever more profitable, and not only that, but reinvesting in new technology so that they will continue to be profitable into the next century.

The Sault Ste Marie of today is a different place than the Sault Ste Marie of even a year ago. I said in this House not so long ago that one only has to compare, for example, Christmas and January of 1994-95 to Christmas and January of 1995-96 and the feeling among small business people and consumers in Sault Ste Marie at that very important time in the life of the retail sector of my community to understand the major change, the chill that has come on my community and that I suggest has come on communities across this province because of the slashing and downsizing of this government, the removing from communities of the kinds of job opportunities we've always counted on to provide services and employment opportunities.

In Christmas of 1994-95 in Sault Ste Marie you could walk through the malls, you could walk down the streets, visit with your friends and neighbours, and everybody was up, everybody was feeling good. They were confident that the economy was getting better. They were spending money. Small business was making profit. The community was moving. The city was looking at new projects. The economic development officer was entertaining new ideas re what else we could do in the primary industrial sector to guarantee that we would have a future into the next 10 and 20 years. People were feeling good.

But in the Christmas of 1995 and January of 1996 it was a far different picture. People were no longer confident, because they knew there was a chance that, if they hadn't already lost their job, they would lose their job. Christmas of 1995 saw everybody in Sault Ste Marie who was dependent on the social assistance system lose 21.6% of the income they had, they counted on, they worked with to provide for themselves and their family the kind of Christmas that we have all come to expect, that we all take for granted.

In Sault Ste Marie that 21.6% that was taken out of the pay packet, the take-home money of the poorest in our community, amounted to about \$2 million every month — \$2 million out of the economy of my city at a time when we were experiencing a very fragile recovery. If you multiply that by 12, it amounts to \$24 million that wasn't being spent in Sault Ste Marie. If you add that to the loss in the fall of 1995 in my city by way of the downsizing of government agencies and organizations, the reduction of people working for government, of about \$30 million to \$35 million, you're talking about \$40 million to \$50 million out of the economy of Sault Ste Marie. That's felt most profoundly around Christmas time, because that's the time that people spend a lot of money. That's the time the retail sector counts on to guarantee they will have a successful year. That money was not being spent.

Even those who had money, even those who continued to have a job, were not spending it, because they weren't



sure they were going to have a job in 1996 or 1997. Where this government will tell you, by way of a package of legislation such as the one we have in front of us here today, that what it's doing is creating a climate in which business will do better, and when business does better the expectation is that we will all do better, because we will have jobs and be able to participate, I suggest to you that is not the case. As with everything else they've done in their short term so far in office, there's more packaging, there's more wrapping to this than there is substance inside.

2220

There's nothing in this for the ordinary working person in the province of Ontario; there's nothing in this for the person who is desperately looking for a job, who would love to be off the social assistance system, given an opportunity to work, not to speak — maybe I'll talk to that in a little while; I'm not sure — of the public relations job that's being done on all of us around the issue of how good workfare is going to be for everybody. Anybody who's looked at that particular phenomenon, where it's been tried in jurisdictions in the United States and around the world, knows it's another Trojan horse, that there's nothing there either, that in the end you have a whole bunch of ideological right-wing zealots, who just do not believe in social assistance for anybody, feeling good because they've done this workfare thing; they've kicked some butt of poor people. It makes them feel good but in the end they're the only ones feeling good.

The people in this province will not be fooled, because there are those of us around who will work with them, and they with us, to get to the bottom of this so we can determine what is the truth and what is not; what is good for people and what is bad for people; what's good medicine and what's bad medicine.

I want to read for you, if you would indulge me for a minute, the executive summary of a study we did in Sault Ste Marie re the impacts of decisions made by this government that we're told will be ultimately good for us. But we know from the study that was done and the extrapolation that's done here by an economist from McMaster University, Atif Kubursi, that this is not good medicine. This is snake oil.

"The Sault economy has experienced continuous structural change and restructuring over most of its recent history. In the past the Sault was fortunate to have been able to marshal its resources and influences to mitigate against the difficult problems it faced. The adoption of innovative and cooperative strategies in the late 1980s spared the Sault from some major economic difficulties. The present challenges are, however, unprecedented in scope, context and implications while the current economic and policy environments are no longer accommodative of the Sault's economic and social objectives.

"Sooner or later, the combined effects of provincial cuts in expenditures and taxes will have adverse economic impacts on the economy of the Sault. The magnitude of these impacts depends on the proportion of the tax cut that would be spent in Ontario. But even with full spending of the tax savings the Sault will experience a loss of 652 person-years of employment."

If every dollar saved by those who are fortunate enough to have a job by way of the tax cut is spent in

Sault Ste Marie — that's 1% marginal propensity to consume — we will still lose 652 person-years of employment in our city and all that means by way of wages and spending power.

"These losses will grow in step with lower spending proportions. If nothing is spent of the tax savings, the employment losses will exceed 1,712 person-years. The adverse impacts will spread throughout the community and will not be restricted to those initially affected. The economy is a complex network of dependent activities.

"The expenditure cuts will cut jobs. Incomes will fall and so will consumer expenditures. Retail sales will contract as well as all types of goods and services sold in the community. The initial impacts will be propagated throughout the community. Real estate values will fall bringing down local tax revenues and the ability of the local government to sustain its programs and expenditures. The cuts and contractions will affect everybody. Nobody will be spared.

"Economic losses result in social difficulties too. With higher unemployment, the Sault could look to increased family violence and more crime. The stability and cohesiveness of the community will be challenged as never before.

"The community can still rise to the challenge and mitigate their negative effects" but it will be difficult. It will be a real challenge and it will require all of us to get involved, and ultimately I suggest that it will require an approach and an attitude from government that are different from the ones we have today. I am convinced by way of this study which was done by a person of some repute in the business of looking at the impact of various scenarios on job loss or job creation and so many other things we've experienced from this government in the last year that have been packaged in a language that would have us believe we're all going to be better off in the end if we only swallow this tablet and get on with it and stop whining and complaining, when in fact that is not the case.

As I've said before, what we have before us tonight is another example of that: the great new day that was going to be created once we got rid of all the red tape, the anticipation we all lived in over the last number of months as we awaited the report of the parliamentary assistants around the question of how we were going to reduce red tape in this province so that business could get on with its life and we could all be better off. What we have here tonight is a series of bills that are nothing but housekeeping and the dusting off of some things that were already on their way. I suggest to you that the people out there will not be fooled.

Let me read for you a couple of letters I received from some constituents in my community to let you know that they know what's going on, they know what's underneath all this and more and more they're coming to understand that this is not good for them or for their neighbours or for their family members. They will continue to write and their numbers will grow, and in the end — I know that some of your caucus are genuinely concerned about the lives of the people you represent — unless you call the leaders of your cabinet to task on this, we will all be worse off. You will not get a chance again, after the next election, to continue to be government.



This is a little letter from a person in my community, to let you know how they're feeling:

"This may not be nice to say, but it looks good on the Conservatives, on the people who voted Mike Harris's government in. Anyone who would vote for a Tory must know nothing of politics or they're a crook. They're the only ones I know that lie right to your face and are always doing crooked deals for their own benefit, then they will literally laugh and smile at you on TV.

"I am serious when I say I am amazed some of them have lasted this long. The main problem is now we can't get rid of them until their full five-year term is up. It would take 20 years to straighten out the mess. I'd like to say lots, but I'd need a 900-page letter. Just take a look at these leaders some time."

This is sent to me by a constituent in Sault Ste Marie who is just beside herself or himself as to what they should do.

**Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton North):** It's not Local 2251, is it?

**Mr Martin:** No, it's not Local 2251; it's not one of those people you so easily write off as an interest group or big union. It's an ordinary person out of Sault Ste Marie, a working person who just is so concerned about what they see coming at them and how it's affecting them, their family members and their neighbours.

2230

Here's another one:

"Dear Tony:

"My wife and I are writing this letter to thank you and your friends of the Legislative Assembly for all you are doing to fight the Mike Harris cuts to the people of Ontario. Here are our views on how the Harris cuts have hurt us.

"Before the cuts to welfare we were getting \$912 per month, and after the cuts we're now getting \$704 per month, but the cost of living for each month has not gone down. Instead, it has gone up. It takes every dime I get each month to feed my family. I have no money left to buy clothes, so can Mr Harris tell me how it is that he believes that people on welfare are doing so well?

"I myself have worked from the age of 13. I am now 42 years old and I had to go on welfare because the company I worked for closed in the year 1991 because of the GST. So I took on work anywhere I could find it for wages lower than minimum wage just so that I could feed my family.

"I went back to school to get my grade 12 diploma, plus I took food out of the mouths of my family just so I could upgrade my driver's licence to obtain my DZ licence in order to find work. I had to pay for this out of my own pocket. I didn't get any help from the government. So I'm asking you, sir, to ask Mr Harris: Where are all the jobs his government promised? I've done everything I could do to prepare myself for these jobs, so where are the jobs?

"I don't want to be on welfare. I want to work. But there are no jobs in the Sault, Mr Martin. I'm sorry that I had to write this letter to you, but I can't sit back and watch the Harris government rip this province apart.

"My wife and I watch the Legislative Assembly of Ontario on TV every day starting at 1:30 pm, and we

understand the fight that you and your friends of the people of Ontario are having with the government side of the House. But I have to ask these few questions about the health care system:

"(1) My wife has to take five or six prescriptions every month for her asthma, and now I'm going to have to pay for these. She has severe asthma.

"(2) I had to take my wife to the hospital suddenly one weekend not too long ago to see the doctor on call, and he ordered a chest X-ray at 6 am, but they only had one person on call at the time to do the job. The chest X-ray was done around 9 am, because the person had to look after two hospitals. So what kind of health care system do we have in Ontario?

"This next question is for Mike Harris: Who do you work for, the people of Ontario or the people of America?

"PS: My wife and I would like to say thanks to the following: Mr Tony Martin, Mr Bud Wildman, Mrs Frances Lankin," it says here, "Mrs Lyn McLeod, Mrs Elinor Caplan and Mr Gerry Phillips for all the hard work and long hours you have put in to help the people of Ontario to fight this government."

I have got a whole whack of these and I could go on, but I know there are others in the House who want to speak tonight on this bill because they feel equally concerned about the condition of this province as we continue to deal with and have to come to terms with legislation such as this that says one thing, that builds us all up in Ontario to expectations that are beyond all belief, and then drops us flat: nothing, absolutely nothing, particularly nothing for the working men and women of this province and those who are most in need.

There was mention made in this letter as well about the fact that in the Common Sense Revolution, during the election, this government promised that they would create, I believe it was, 750,000 jobs.

**Mr Spina:** It was 725,000.

**Mr Martin:** They said they would create 725,000 jobs. I'm told there are in fact a few that have been created, and I'll tell you we're thankful for that and we're hoping there will be more, but it is nowhere close to the 725,000. If you continue at the pace you're going, the 100 here or 1,000 there that's been going on for the last year, you won't even come close at the end of your term to creating those kinds of jobs.

I know from my own experience in Sault Ste Marie that all we've seen so far is a slashing and a cutting of jobs. In Sault Ste Marie already we've lost between 400 and 500 jobs, and that's not to speak of the multiplier effect, the jobs that are lost in the retail sector because those people are no longer buying the goods they normally would.

We expect in Sault Ste Marie, by way of this study that we've done, that if at one end none of the tax break money that people are expecting is spent in Sault Ste Marie, we will lose over 1,700 jobs, and that's a conservative figure. If all of the money that people get back by way of the tax cut is spent, we will still lose between 650 and 700 jobs, full-time equivalents, in Sault Ste Marie.

Some people may see that as a good thing. I have a hard time figuring that one out. I have a hard time



figuring out what else you have to offer the people of Ontario besides a cutting of the public service sector jobs that so many people looked forward to participating in. I know of all kinds of people I went to school with or who are going to school now — I think of my own four kids, who dream of one day maybe becoming a teacher or a nurse or a doctor, but there is no longer in Ontario the kind of opportunity that was here even a year ago in those areas, and so they're concerned, they're worried. They don't know what they should be doing in preparing for their future. They hear about the 725,000 jobs, but they don't know what those jobs are going to be in, they don't know what kind of industry is going to be coming at us that we can participate in, so they don't know what kinds of courses to be taking.

I remember last year I had two students come here from Humber College to speak to me. It happened to be at the same time as we were doing estimates and the Minister of Education was in front of us. They were halfway through a social work program at that college and they wanted to know, given the reality that had already begun to unfold, which was the downsizing of the public service, which meant there would be less need for people with a social service training background, if they should continue and complete that course. They wanted to know, if they decided not to continue and complete that course, what other course they should be taking. The minister couldn't tell them. He gave them a lecture on how it was imprudent to be spending money today that the children of tomorrow would have to make up for.

I don't think there's anybody who isn't concerned about the finances of this province, but the question we have to ask is, are we going to make the children of today suffer so the children of tomorrow can have a better future? Does it make any sense to be trading one off against the other? That seems to be the order of the day, though, in Harris Ontario. We trade one group of people off against another, we set one group of people up against another group of people, and at the end of the day what we have really is an exercise where, I suggest to you — I may be wrong, and I have to tell you, given that you're going to be government for the next three or four years, that I hope I am wrong — the only people in this province who will be better off at the end of the day, given the agenda that is unfolding in front of us and that is happening to us in this province, will be the richest among us. All the figures are showing us, all the facts that we look at, all the data that are being collected are telling us, that the gap between the rich and the poor is widening. Even those in the middle class, who used to consider themselves fairly well off, who used to be confident that they would have a future that would speak about quality of life and dignity and opportunity for themselves and their children, are beginning now to question that, because they see more and more of their friends falling off the wagon, and that's where we're going.

Again, I return to this package of legislation that we have in front of us here today. This red tape initiative that is going to be the elixir that will allow for business in this province to get on with what it does best, this fix that will see government get out of the faces of business

in Ontario, I suggest to you is going to be a big disappointment to a whole lot of people once they get a chance to get their teeth into it and begin to look at it a bit, because there's nothing here. There's nothing here for anybody. If there is and if it's consistent with everything else that you've done in the 12 months you've had as government, it will end up, I am sure, to be more in the interests of those who have, of those who run the companies, who own the companies, who are rich in this province, and not in the interests of those who actually do the work, those who actually are most important, given any investment in this province and any potential this province has to compete in a global economy out there in a way that speaks to quality of life and dignity for human beings and all those things we have all held so sacred over the many years we've lived and worked together in community in this province.

2240

I will end there, although, as I said, I have other letters here that I could read that would very clearly say to you and to the folks in this House that the people out there are catching on. The people out there are beginning to realize and to understand what it is that you're about. It's been a year now. That's not a long time, but in the life of a person who lives from day to day on the now 21.6% less income than they had less than a year ago, a year is a long, long time, but they know. They know. They're catching on and they will be asking you some very tough questions and I suggest that you might want to be thinking about what you're doing as you leave this place in a few days to go for summer holidays. I hope that you will take some of that time to walk out in the streets of the communities that you come from and that you take some time to talk to some people and that you hear them as they tell you of their concerns, of their fears, of their anxieties and what it is that they feel would be in their best interest for you to do as government.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Frank Sheehan (Lincoln):** I'd like to respond a bit to the member for St Catharines and the member for Sault Ste Marie. They're both quite correct that this first go at red tape reduction is somewhat like an attack on Fibber McGee's closet: we are opening the door and getting rid of a lot of useless, non-functioning rules and regulations. But I'd also like to restate that the first principle espoused in the Red Tape Review Commission is that this government is committed to protecting the environment, community standards, health and safety. It's going to be very difficult for the opposition to appreciate that you can really eliminate excess, whether it be in regulation or rule-making, without compromising these principles. I know it's going to come very difficult for them to understand, but it's possible. A lot of businesses and a lot of institutions have figured out how to survive without an awful lot of regulation as long as they keep their eye on the ball, which is to protect the value system upon which this society is based.

The reg review in Bill 66 is kind of simplistic. All it's trying to do is standardize some approval processes. It's trying to eliminate some duplication. It's trying to establish some national standards on the subject of evaluating the toxicity and the danger of various chemi-



cals and pesticides and it will lead to simplifying the process so that one agency, namely the federal government, will vet these processes and establish whether or not they're safe and what precautions are required and it will facilitate the use of these chemicals by the people who need them — the farmers, principally. Right now, we are competing against products in the States that are treated with these chemicals and we have no options. So simplicity, modernization is going to help make it user-friendly.

**Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls):** I'd love to rise in debate and rebut the comments from the member for Sault Ste Marie but I think we have some rules in this House where you're supposed to speak to the bill during debate, and since the member didn't remotely do that, if I rebutted him, Speaker, you'd tell me to sit down because I wouldn't be talking about the bill, so I'm going to try to talk a little bit about Bill 67, which is one of the bills in question. I'm going to talk about Bill 67, which is An Act to simplify government processes and to improve efficiency in the Ministry of Health.

Members opposite tried to make everyone at home worry about new fees, but this bill has no new fees whatsoever for the health care consumer. One of the things that it does do, admittedly, is transfer — instead of cabinet having to approve some licensing fees, for instance, for long-term care facilities and ambulance operators, after it goes through all the bureaucracy and through the political staff and gets all these approvals and the minister finally approves it and it's gone through all this delay and time-wasting, now the minister, once he gets it and approves it, that's good enough, and I think that's important. I think that's common sense for the people at home and that's a good part of this bill.

What else does it do? It eliminates requirements for ministerial approval for routine decisions by institutions. For instance, the home for the aged previously had to get ministerial approval for the appointment of administration or a doctor who was going to be at the home for the aged, and we're saying that's no longer necessary, that these institutions are mature enough to do this on their own.

It eliminates the requirement for cabinet approval for routine decisions by institutions. Another example here is that the bylaws of the Ontario Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation took over three months to be approved in the past, but now we'll be able to approve them much quicker because the minister will be able to do this without going to cabinet.

**Ms Lankin:** I actually think that the member was speaking about the bill and in fact he was addressing the very fact that this series of bills, which purports to be about streamlining, purports to be about elimination of red tape, purports to be about getting it easier for business to do their business and to concentrate on their business and therefore grow jobs, has got nothing to do with that whatsoever.

The member read out a letter from a constituent which said very clearly, asking the government: "Where are the jobs? Where are the 725,000 jobs that you promised?" Let's look for them. The germ that's going to grow and create these jobs, where is it in this bill? I don't know. Let me look through.

Here's one: "The amendment to the Victims' Right to Proceeds of Crime Act corrects a reference to the Public Guardian and Trustee Act which currently refers to the Public Trustee Act." Heck of a lot of jobs in that one.

How about this one? "The South African Trust Investments Act: With the end of apartheid in South Africa, the reason for the act no longer exists." True. Lots of jobs in that, though, eh? We're really going to get a lot of jobs there.

How about this? "The McMichael Canadian Art Collection Act: It removes the requirement to obtain ministerial approval before hiring" — maybe there's a job here — "or removing a director of the collection." Oh well, we could get one job or we could lose one job. Where are the jobs? I don't know.

Then there's the bill that will eliminate reference to the regional ministry offices in signage repair etc. Why? Because we closed these regional offices and these amendments eliminate the regulation concerning the types of signs that have to be posted in the regional office. Lot of jobs in that one, let me tell you.

The bottom line is, this has got nothing to do with making it easier for business to do business in Ontario. This has got a lot to do with bureaucracy in the government. It's not harmful in any way, but it's not helpful.

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** It's very important for people to assess the general direction of this government, to know what's happening in general terms with deregulation, because it does come down, after all, when hundreds and hundreds of laws are being removed at a rapid rate, as to whether or not this government can be trusted with those kinds of measures.

We learned today again in committee with similar bills but more encompassing, with Bill 54, that this is not something that the public should stand by and let happen sanguinely, because with Bill 54, over \$9 million of government revenue is being given back to people in industry. We find that that deregulation, done in the name of efficiency and in the name of making government better, instead has turned out to be gifts ranging from \$2.7 million to \$3.4 million to various industry associations, some of which think they can do a better job with it; many of whom think they'll simply give it back to industry. So we have a \$9-million hole created in the name of self-regulation, in the name of deregulation, of making government work better.

I think we have to learn that in many, many cases this government doesn't mean what it says when it's talking about bills, even ones that purport to be about simple procedures. In this instance the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, and it's important I think that we relate to him; he's here at this hour — and to really have them appreciate that we have given up a tremendous amount of consumer protection. Every time we do things in politics there are tradeoffs and we want to weigh the balances, but in this case we've given away consumer protection in the sense of any control on the part of elected officials in government. We've given the majority of these boards away to individual associations covering motor vehicles, covering a number of things, and all in the interest of deregulation, the same thing the red tape bills are supposed to be addressing. At the same time



what we get back is absolutely nothing, and apparently not even the knowledge of this government that it was giving \$9 million away.

So there's a caution about the whole process that this government is entering into that I think the public has to be very aware of and realize even innocuous-seeming measures have to be looked at in this way.

2250

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Sault Ste Marie has two minutes.

**Mr Martin:** I have to say I couldn't agree more than I do with the comments of the member for Beaches-Woodbine and the comments of the member for York South, because this is in fact just another in the litany of initiatives by this government to either do one of two things, set up a smoke-and-mirrors exercise or even more fundamentally disturbing and challenging and dangerous, which is a redistribution of wealth. Everything that this government is about and has done is about taking from the poor and giving to the rich, everything, and as life unfolds, I suggest to you we will see this more and more. There was 21.6% taken away from the poorest among us re their income. We had three people freeze to death on the streets of Toronto this winter, and what did we hear from this government? Did you hear anything? Nothing. Absolutely nothing, not a peep, not an inquiry, not a question about, "Oh, why did that happen? What is it that we're doing? Nothing? Something?" Who knows? We were on the verge of an outbreak of — what was the disease that we found on the streets of Toronto this winter because of the lack of food? TB. We were on the verge of an outbreak of TB and we don't know where that's going to end up yet, and anybody who knows about that disease knows that it happens in an environment of poverty and homelessness.

Let me just, in wrapping up, read this letter for you.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Martin:** They can't handle it.

"Dear Tony:

"Thank you for your letter. I feel very strongly about this...in fact, I have already written Mike Harris about it..."

"In Sault Ste Marie last winter, a young woman died literally metres away from a home for young women that was closed down by your government. You are literally killing people in this province."

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired. Thank you very much.

**Mr David Turnbull (York Mills):** You are so ignorant. You're an idiot.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** Oh, Speaker, did you hear that?

**The Acting Speaker:** I didn't hear that. Further debate, please.

**M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott et Russell):** Je dois apporter quelques commentaires concernant trois des huit projets de loi qui sont discutés ce soir, dont le projet de loi 61 sur la Commission de révision de l'évaluation foncière, le projet de loi sur le tourisme et le projet de loi sur le patrimoine.

Ce qui m'inquiète actuellement sur la modification apportée au projet de loi 61 c'est non seulement le fait

que les registrateurs régionaux sont supprimés et aussi que la Commission n'est plus tenue d'affecter un greffier à chaque audience.

What I'm concerned with at the present time is the fact that we have told the Assessment Review Board office in Ottawa not only the fact that the employees will move or offer to be moved to Toronto, it's the fact that now we have to wait three and six months to be heard. In our county, Prescott and Russell, especially ever since the landslide at Lemieux way back in 1993, there have been over 300 applications for revision. The 300 applications for the appeal of their assessment was sent to Toronto by the Ontario revenue office of Cornwall because there's a dispute there. There was a major landslide of 75 acres of land, forestland, into the river. The roads were completely eliminated. The people appealed their assessment and the revenue office from Cornwall has reduced their assessment by 50%, but the municipality appealed the position of the revenue office.

Now the whole thing has to go to the Assessment Review Board, which just lately was moved to Toronto. I agree at times we have to centralize, but in this case —

**Mr Stockwell:** We have to clean that up.

**Mr Lalonde:** I know, Chris, you are in favour of reducing the cost. Everybody is in favour of reducing the deficit, but in this case, it was not the fault of all the residents if there was a major landslide. In this case, I would say the user fees should not apply. Really, the government should help those people because you just can't sell those properties and those people have to pay taxes, but the fact that it's been held up at the Assessment Review Board — there's no decision that can be made until the cases are heard. So I don't know how long it is going to take yet, but having to move the Assessment Review Board to the Toronto centre has no sense really in there.

The other point that I want to discuss is the heritage. Je crois que le patrimoine de l'Ontario est très important par respect pour nos aînés, les fondateurs de notre province, de notre pays. Je me rappelle du temps de William Davis. Il avait décidé de reconnaître tous les sites historiques de la province. Je me rappelle à Rockland W.C. Edward ; le parc qui est nommé en son honneur aujourd'hui, le parc du moulin, a été reconnu par le gouvernement conservateur du temps.

Mais le fait que nous allons réduire de 21 à 12 les membres du bureau de direction, je crois qu'on va définitivement oublier le secteur rural. Il est très important aujourd'hui de reconnaître les sites historiques, les sites de patrimoine, pourrait-on dire, les édifices. Lorsque nous voyageons en Europe, par exemple, souvent nous sommes portés à visiter ou nous nous arrêtons visiter les églises, par exemple. Sans la reconnaissance de ces sites comme étant sites historiques, je crois que nous allons procéder à la démolition. Le fait que nous avons 21 membres qui étaient répartis à travers la province aidait définitivement le gouvernement provincial à reconnaître ces endroits comme étant des sites historiques.

Aujourd'hui, avec la réduction, je crois que nous allons réduire les coûts, mais je crois que nous aurions pu prendre une autre approche. Au lieu de réduire le nombre de directeurs sur les bureaux de direction de 21 à 12, nous



aurions pu négocier avec ces gens-là qui étaient sur place ou les personnes nommées à ces postes pour réduire les coûts de transport, les coûts de participation lorsqu'on assiste aux réunions.

I think it's very important that at this time that we are going to reduce the number of board members from 21 to 12 — I'm worried at the present time with the fact we're doing that. I was just saying that when you visit in Europe, you visit old churches, you visit old schools, historical sites, and that board was established to make sure that we protect the heritage. Very often, it helps us to recognize what our grandparents have done, the founders of our country have done, but by eliminating a number of board members I think very often we'll forget about what had happened in the rural area.

L'autre domaine que je veux toucher c'est le domaine du tourisme. Nous allons planter des frais d'utilisateurs. Nous reconnaissons que l'industrie touristique est la quatrième industrie majeure dans notre province. The tourism industry employs over 272,000 people a year, just in the tourism area. The revenue from the tourist sector is over \$17 billion. I really feel that we should do anything, as much as we can do, to attract tourists in Ontario. We know that the tourism industry is not like it used to be three or four years ago. We have closed offices in Europe. We are not doing the publicity that we should do in Quebec.

2300

Just the other day I was down here and there was a group from France visiting Queen's Park, the Legislative Building. The lady who came from Quebec here as a tour guide, the question that was asked to me and my colleague Ben Grandmaître from Vanier was, how many francophones do we have in Ontario? We have over 550,000 francophones in Ontario. But it's not only the fact that she didn't know how many francophones there were in Ontario — because you have to remember, more and more tourists are coming from France to Ontario. There's a reason, because of the Canada-France organization that exists. But the lady who was the tour guide, she immediately said, "The majority of francophones in Ontario live in the Windsor area." Immediately it shows that the people from Quebec don't know much about Ontario, about the francophone sector or about the francophone community.

If we are to implement user fees in tourist areas such as parks — and in my riding I have the Parc du voyageur at the entrance of Quebec to Ontario, just off Highway 417 — if we are to increase the fees at that park, I'm pretty sure that we won't get the number of tourists that we get from Quebec in that area. Quebec tourists are very important for the Ontario economy. We have to spend a little more in Quebec to let them know in Ontario that we are ready to accept them with open arms. This is money that they will inject into the economy of Ontario.

But when I looked at this Bill 65 that will give the authorization to the minister to implement user fees, I really feel that we should pay attention where we are going to have the user fee, where it is for tourism. We have to do everything to attract tourists. If we are to increase the fees, we will not attract tourists.

Donc, je crois que c'est très important pour nous, le tourisme en Ontario, qui embauche plus de 272 000

personnes par année dans le secteur. Le tourisme injecte dans l'économie de la province plus de 17 milliards de dollars par année. Si nous procédons avec l'implantation de frais d'utilisateurs tels que dans le Parc du voyageur à l'entrée de l'Ontario en venant du Québec, je crois que la mise en place de frais d'utilisateurs, leur augmentation, va définitivement éloigner le tourisme ici-même en Ontario.

I am pleased to speak on those matters and I'm pretty sure that the government will take this seriously when we talk about tourism, when we talk about heritage and also when we talk about the Assessment Review Board. Those are all points or subjects that we should pay attention to, because the Assessment Review Board, the fact that we have moved it to Toronto, the rural people will have to pay the note whenever it comes time to get the service.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Questions or comments?

**Mr Tony Clement (Brampton South):** I would like to thank my friend across the way, the honourable member for Prescott-Russell, for his comments. As parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, I wish to address my remarks specifically to his comments respecting the Ontario Heritage Foundation.

Indeed, it was the members of the boards such as the Ontario Heritage Foundation, the McMichael Canadian Art Collection and Science North who asked us to have the ability to have greater control over some of the facets of their management, including the size of their boards, which they found to be unmanageable, quite frankly. So I want to assure the honourable member that those who are involved in the Ontario Heritage Foundation are quite convinced that the board is now more manageable, that they have the flexibility to do their jobs better on behalf of the people of Ontario.

I think one of the things we've learned in Ontario over the past 10 years is that bigger is not necessarily better, that we don't get better public policy merely by putting more members on the boards or creating more agencies, boards and commissions. We have learned, perhaps, that throwing money at problems does not indeed create the solutions; in fact, it creates greater problems than those that were originally envisaged by the public policymakers.

We, as politicians, have to do our job to exercise some restraint. It's always so easy to say, "Gee, there's a problem out there; let's go out and fix it, as government," but sometimes government doesn't have the solutions; sometimes we have to work with the private sector partners, with community leaders, with volunteers and with the activists in the community to find the real solutions to the problems. I think that's what this bill is all about, if I may say so to the honourable member for Prescott and Russell. This bill is to empower some of the volunteer sectors, some of the people who are active in their communities, to do their jobs better and thereby make better public policy for Ontario.

**Mr Bradley:** Actually what this bill is about is an abandonment of the responsibility of the provincial government in many key areas except for the area to set new fees and to give yet newer and more powers to individual ministers. I think that's one of the problems the member for Prescott and Russell has identified in his remarks this evening. We have a bill, while disguised in



a name which sounds very attractive — and that was exposed somewhat by the member for Beaches-Woodbine, the name and how it was not anything about creating new jobs. What it is, is creating something new, and that's going to be new fees and additional fees that will be imposed upon the people of this province. They will be what you would call taxes.

My friend the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations is here tonight and actively listening to the debate. He would know, because he's heard his leader, the Premier of this province, say that a user fee is in effect a tax. He applauded when Mr Harris, who was then the leader of the third party, stated that; I applauded him. I was very enthusiastic about that statement. I knew when Mr Harris became the Premier that we would not see user fees imposed. I was very confident of that, and I know my friend the member for Carleton was very confident of that. Alas, I look at this legislation, and what does it do? It gives individual ministers an opportunity, the right, to hike fees without anybody else knowing about it.

I know the minister will be concerned about this aspect. As a cabinet minister, he will have control only over the fees under the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations. There will be no more orders in council on many of these fees. So he won't be able to have his input to stand up for the consumers of this province, as the mandate of his ministry suggests, the way he stood up for the consumers over gas prices in this province.

**Mr Spina:** I was pleased to hear the member for St Catharines indicate he had confidence in the now Premier during the election campaign. I only trust that he cast his vote our way.

This legislation will eliminate red tape in the operation of some of the tourist agencies. As a PA in economic development, it is our intention to reduce those regulations in tourist establishments because a number of these agencies and tourist establishments operate under legislation that requires that fees and forms be set by regulation. In particular, we're amending the Historical Parks Act, the Ontario Place Corporation Act, the St. Clair Parkway Commission Act and the Tourism Act to simplify the process for setting fees and prescribing forms.

This is consistent with the recommendations of the Red Tape Review Commission to reduce the barriers, because they say that user fees, as the member for Prescott and Russell was stating, are what will cause a reduction in tourism, but the reality is that tourism is reduced when they see the word "tax." They don't have a problem paying a fee for entrance to a park. Let them have the authority. Those who run the parks and those who run the tourist facilities want the option. They do not want government dictating their fees.

You want to know about job creation in this province: 76,000 net jobs from last July until this past May, net new jobs in this province. Furthermore, the high-technology sector in Ottawa, as another area of employment, is hiring 40 new people a week. That is a wonderful piece of news because those are where the real jobs are being created in Ontario.

2310

**Mr Maves:** The member for St Catharines did mention that this bill would be about getting out of some areas, and we are doing that in some areas of duplication.

I want to give you an example from Bill 67: the Cancer Remedies Act from the early 1930s, which was brought in to keep people who were travelling around with circuses and carnivals from selling miracle cancer remedies. There was never a prosecution ever since that act was brought in in the 1930s. It's not necessary. It's also a duplication because it's already covered under the Regulated Health Professions Act.

There are other acts that are already duplications like the War Veterans Burial Act, another one from the 1930s, which said municipalities had to pay \$15 for a homeless war veteran's burial. Again, no one has paid out any money under this act for years and years. It's redundant and it's duplication because the federal Ministry of Veterans Affairs looks after this area.

There's one other one. In the early 1960s, the Hypnosis Act came in to govern who could conduct hypnosis in the province. Again, this is duplication because it's covered under the Regulated Health Professions Act.

We need to get rid of this duplication and the Ministry of Health needs to continue to work with Mr Sheehan and his red tape committee to get rid of these duplications, to save money and to put that money into front-line services where it's needed. We've put \$300 million more into health care because we streamlined in areas like this. The member for St Catharines-Brock and the member for Lincoln worked very hard to get funding for MRI in St Catharines and I know the member for St Catharines supported that. That's all made possible by streamlining like this, finding efficiencies and putting everything into front-line services. Kidney dialysis is another area that we've been able to fund because we found these types of savings. That's what these acts are all about, finding the money, finding the savings, getting rid of the duplication and putting it into front-line services for better care for Ontario citizens.

**The Speaker:** The member for Prescott and Russell has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr Lalonde:** First, I'd like to thank the honourable members for their input. At times, staff like to work with the least number of board members around the table, but I just want to bring to your attention that I'm glad at times there's no user fee when you pay a visit as a tourist in the farming community. I was just given a picture a little while ago by the Hansard reporter, Beth Grahame, of a visit — I call it a tourist visit — to the Speaker's farm not too long ago. We were glad that we didn't have to pay any fee to visit that beautiful farm. So I just thought of bringing this to your attention, Mr Speaker. I think it's your farm, too. This picture shows that the farming community is also a tourist attraction.

**The Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Kennedy:** I'd just like to make a brief comment about the regulations in question, the acts to streamline, purportedly, the business of this government. Instead, what we see are some threats in the sense of the directions that are being taken. While each of the measures is minor in nature, overall, as the member for Prescott and Russell earlier pointed out, they have a certain kind of character of not necessarily responding to logic.

One of the members opposite talked about working with the community. There's a lot of noise from the other



side but very little substance on the idea of working with the community. Taking funds away from the various historic sites and the recreation facilities and Ontario Place and so on and then giving them the ability to impose what are not marketplace measures, but losing their public-purpose dollars and trying to recoup those in the marketplace, means a number of things, and one of the things it means is that fewer and fewer people in this province are going to be able to participate in some of the very things that public dollars over the years have created for people to enhance the quality of life in this province. By that, I mean simply, without any drama, the people who are the poorest in this province. Every user fee — I think people just heard a bell go off; that was the 758th user fee being enacted in this province since this government has come to power — is taking away some of the quality of life from people who have reduced means.

When we look at the strategies this government would purport to support in terms of people who are either unemployed or find themselves in difficult circumstances, they would wish for them a measure of self-reliance. Instead, at every corner, they are creating more and more barriers, whether it's within the school system in terms of the user fees that people find there or in terms of the simple recreation opportunities they have for their families.

You only have to look at the transit system and the bloody-minded consequences that have happened there. Every single time a new user fee is introduced, we see ridership go down. Then we see governments called upon to either bail out the system or the quality of the system being diluted. What we have there is a cycle that responds to no business insight but rather a simple-minded and I guess ideologically driven line of thinking that says, "As long as we take government money out of it, it doesn't matter whether the enterprise fails." I think we've seen a number of cases where the patient has died in terms of this government's experiments so far, and we expect that to be true in terms of the number of things that happen in terms of regulations.

The other thing this House needs to be aware of, and certainly the public needs to know, is that the government has not been taking due care. We hear much about red tape commissions and we hear many promises made and fancy titles attached, but really we've seen a big gap between the kinds of measures this government has done and what they're purported to accomplish.

I mentioned earlier, for example, the consumer deregulation that took place and the \$9 million worth of government money that the minister in this House said would be a wash, but then his deputy minister in committee hearings later had to agree it was indeed \$9 million.

In the instance of automobile dealers, for example, \$600,000 was being spent by the ministry to regulate those automobile dealers, and now they'll be given self-regulation. They'll also take with that \$3.2 million in fees that were collected from them. There is no assurance in the legislation or in the administrative agreements to follow that that will indeed be used to protect people who buy new and used cars. It's unfair not only to the public of this province that these kinds of measures be taken in such a wanton and reckless way, but it's unfair to the

industries that are affected, because it casts an unnecessary aspersion on them in terms of people who are now given the majority of regulation and therefore can't command public confidence. Now it turns out they're being given \$2.5 million worth of what used to be public money which will have to be taken somewhere out of the consumer and commercial relations budget, which means even less in consumer protection.

I think we find, in some of the single-mindedness of this government, errors that will take years and years to fix. But I'm sure this government will be comforted as it steps through some of these errors to know that there are willing members on this side of the House to fix those mistakes. We would encourage upon you any diversity of opinion, any diversity of outlook that would prevent some of these from taking place, because again, what's happening in terms of the deregulation that is trying to replace public interest activity with user fees is disenfranchising people.

For those of us who have the kinds of salaries that are being paid to members in this House, for those of us who have had careers or whatever that provide us with far above the basic standards of life, this is not an easy thing for us to have on our minds automatically, but it certainly is the case that for thousands of families around this province, every single extra user fee is a deduction in their quality of life.

Somewhere instead we have to start drawing a basic line under which we know the consequences of what happens when we impose these user fees. We're not saying to ourselves that \$2, for example — the price of a transit ticket in Metropolitan Toronto — is actually enough to make people walk miles and miles to do simple things like their shopping and so on; it's inefficient. In other words, what we think is somehow making people self-reliant is actually putting up barriers, the thousand small cuts that really prevent people from actualizing their potential. We have a sophisticated society here that sometimes isn't recognized by the members opposite. We have to have arrangements, indeed from government at all, but just allowing people to maximize their potential, and that's what we're not finding in some of the single-mindedness that removes regulations.

We have found and we're finding, especially in recent months, that people are having to give up even the simplest things in their lives, not only transportation, but giving up telephones. To show a degree of non-partisanship, the federal sector has allowed phone rates to be increased on a domestic basis. If you could have captured the sound that created, it was the hangups all over the city as low-income people had to cancel their phone service. It's not an exaggeration; it's a simple fact that 35% of people, for example, in the former area I was involved in with food banks didn't have a telephone. When you consider that many of these are people who've worked all their lives, people who have university educations, people who've paid taxes most of the time in terms of their working lives and then find themselves in the kind of circumstance where they can't afford phones, you start to appreciate, you begin to understand what it means when you slap on user fees for things that we would like to believe are public attractions or things that we think add



to the quality of life. Because what you start to do, just as the rent control legislation introduced today is about sentencing people to their own apartments, to have them stay in those places, so do deregulation and some of the red tape rules that add user fees limit the very existence that people have.

2320

I think it's an effort that we have to ask the members on the opposite side to continue to make to try to find in these measures the impact that it's creating on the community, because every user fee has that impact. Not only is it not necessarily good for business in terms of some of the quasi-public bodies that we have trying to do their part to attract tourists into the areas where they exist to try to see those spinoff dollars created; it's a locus of efficiency — at least it tries to be — to try to see where those dollars need to be invested to try to help operators in those areas be able to employ people. If we raise those barriers too high, tourists and other discerning people will also find that it's something that they can't use, as the member for Prescott-Russell has made very clear.

I think that we will find also that in each of those things there's a certain base of local use. I think what we'll find in the campgrounds and the other places that are affected by user fees is that those facilities will find themselves less and less in use. What we have then is a net reduction in the quality of life, no real savings in terms of the money that's returned to support those facilities because we simply don't have at this time the assessment being made by the government opposite about how exactly is the best way to run these facilities. There hasn't been the time permitted, there hasn't been a way to get that done, and part of that is the blinkers that this government wears about the way to do things.

As we heard one of the members opposite earlier talking about how this is the only way for it to go, I think instead we need to take a more sophisticated approach to look at how government operation can be made to work better — yes, eventually more effectively, but first of all to make better. When I heard the member talk about public groups or community groups, one of the things that community groups are finding is that the government is taking money away first and asking questions later.

I think one of the things I can tell, from my own involvement in community organizations, that this government needs to appreciate — and I think it is important because obviously there's more and more work being done by community groups — is that that simply is acting in the opposite way that the government would purport to intend. In other words, it's taking away from the ability of community groups to plan, to recruit volunteers, to really feel that they can make a difference in their community. If the government is interested in seeing that happen — because there is a tremendous amount of goodwill out there, notwithstanding some of the disagreement that people have with the government's policies — if the government would really like to see community groups respond in a way that enhances the quality of life in their community, then what we need to have from them is an appreciation that they simply can't be acting as unilaterally as they have been in terms of all manner of these things and still expect an increase in the quality of life in our community.

**The Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Conway:** I see the member for Scarborough wanted to perhaps make a request. So you're going to draw the line. Well, then I will take the opportunity to say a few things about the red tape bills.

At one level it's hard to be opposed to some of this, and I've heard a number of colleagues speak tonight about the need to clean up some of the loose ends that have been left around over the years and some instruments that are just simply not relevant or timely. And I think that's all to the good. I can't quarrel about that.

My friend Bradley and I were chatting earlier. Again, I haven't had a chance to check this, but I remember — and I think this is in an auditor's report about six or seven years ago, I think we were in government, so it would be the late 1980s. I think the Provincial Auditor reported that at or around 1987 or 1988 we were still paying a hangman — pardon the inelegance of that phrase — though capital punishment and official hanging had ceased to be the law of the country for a period of 25 years. The Provincial Auditor told us that we were paying — do you remember that, Mr Speaker? Can you imagine? That's just one that I can — hangman —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Conway:** It was provincial. It was in a Provincial Auditor's report — I'm sure I remember that — that there was an amount of money, I don't think a great amount of money, but I thought, isn't that interesting?

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations):** Is he still around?

**Mr Conway:** No. You might agree that it was one of the few things that Ian Scott did, Normie, of which you might approve.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** We still have a QC.

**Mr Conway:** Oh, well, listen. I see the chancellor of the exchequer is at great pains to tell anybody, at least on paper, that he's a Queen's counsel, and knowing that he has spent long years in the courts of the district of Parry Sound and down at Osgoode Hall, I'm sure the silk came not by political connection but by dint of professional performance.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** Why is David Peterson still using QC behind his name?

**Mr Conway:** I think Peterson had — you're absolutely right.

**Mr Chris Stockwell (Etobicoke West):** So did Robert K. Rae.

**Mr Conway:** R.K. Rae? Well, there are some things that come with the brotherhood of Cecil Rhodes, and surely QC is the least of those honours. After the weekend I think Brother Rae, I say to my friend Stockwell, deserves and requires our solicitous goodwill and more.

The point I make is that 25 years after capital punishment was outlawed by the Parliament of Canada we had on the books and on public accounts an obligation to pay an official hangperson, hangman or whatever; it's an awful phrase. I don't know — the chief executioner. I forget the phrase and I forget who made it; perhaps the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations.

I thought they made a good point. We have aspects of public administration that need review, and I for one, on



behalf of the good burghers of Renfrew, support a timely review of out-of-date regulations or antiquated payments such as the one I've mentioned. It's amazing — I shouldn't say it's amazing, but it strikes me as quite impressive, notwithstanding the fact that 130 of us are paid to be here and to hound-dog the public accounts — that these bits and pieces continue to exist. I sometimes think in my next life, when I'm not an elected official, there will be —

**Mr Stockwell:** What?

**Mr Conway:** Well, my pension's gone, my pay's cut, I say to my friend Stockwell.

**Mr Stockwell:** Oh, you'll teach at the university.

**Mr Conway:** No, no. I couldn't live on that salary, I can tell you. I can just imagine the places across the waterfront of government regulation where I might want to launch a personal attack. I spend a fair bit of time these days doing my constituency work and it's extraordinary, the kinds of things you run into on a regular basis.

There are a number of newly elected members who come from the bar — that is the legal bar, Normie, tonight — and from business, and I understand entirely the frustration that must attach to trying to do business and work your way through the maze of government regulations. It's bad enough to do it in Toronto, but to do it at Westmeath or Palmer Rapids in my part of the province where, if you can get the government line, then you get voicemail and the rest, Harry, is just very frustrating.

One has to agree, and I certainly agree, with that part of this policy that seeks to remove these irritations from the taxpaying public and also to revise from time to time the statutes of the province consistent with new technology, a new outlook and a new political culture. I want to talk about the political culture in a moment.

I want to separate myself somewhat from my friend Mr Bradley and from Ms Lankin who spoke earlier. I'm not one of these people who decries on principle the adjustment of fees. We live in a real world. Fees are going to be increased. The New Democrats did it, the Liberals did it and the Tories will do it. I think it is a fair point to remind Mr Harris, who among his many and several extravagant promises went on, as was observed earlier tonight, to say that a fee increase is just a tax increase by another name. I'm not going to say much more about that than simply to repeat the point others have made, but anybody who knows anything about the real world in which we live knows that fees are going to be adjusted from time to time.

In an earlier exchange tonight, Bradley and the deputy Deputy Speaker, the member for Perth, were talking about OHIP. McKeough's mistake back in 1978, having done nothing to adjust OHIP premiums I think for about four or five years after the 1977 election returned a second consecutive minority Parliament, was that he in one fell swoop increased the premiums by 37.5%.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** It was only 17% or 18% of their costs.

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**Mr Conway:** Oh, Normie, give me a break.

**Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister without Portfolio [Workers' Compensation Board]):** It was paid for by the taxpayers.

**Mr Conway:** My point is that he let five years go by with no increase and then increased in one fell swoop. That was the political mistake. I say to my friend from Manotick, give OHIP premiums a look. What matter for any of us here? I never paid the bloody thing. I suppose it was a taxable benefit; that was the part of that argument I always liked, all the bloody members of the Legislature making it. We didn't pay it directly. Her Majesty paid it on our behalf.

A better example was that all those people in the direct or indirect public sector had a spouse getting coverage, so they were all on the gravy train. Poor old Danford's farmers up in Hastings, oh no, they got to pay it; they paid the whole bloody shot. But there were a whole bunch of members of the Legislature in here beating their breasts, saying, "Oh, well, isn't it — " You know, if we paid it ourselves I might have been a little more respectful of the argument.

My point, to come back to it, was a 37.5% increase in one whack. I think even the redoubtable member for Carleton would have, in his Napoleonic way, done battle had he been in opposition —

**Hon Mr Sterling:** What did he say?

**Mr Conway:** You should have been here when Grossman and Sterling were together. Had Gilbert and Sullivan seen that performance, we would have had something we really could have played before sell-out audiences.

There are going to be fee increases, and it's easy politics for me or anyone else to say, "Isn't it terrible?" These fees are going to be increased. I think the people I represent would expect fee increases to be sensible, understandable, defensible, and 37.5% was not defensible. I'm not here as some kind of caterwauling oppositionist to say, "Elect me and I'm not going to increase any fees." That's just not credible.

I note that this so-called package transfers to individual departmental ministers powers that previously had been vested in the cabinet as a whole. For those of you who have not been in cabinet, and I don't mean that to be as patronizing as it sounds, it's useful. Not all ministers, in my experience, are as politically sensitive as some others. One useful thing that Bradley did in our cabinet was that he tended to keep an eye on some of these fee increases. I think my friend from Manotick would probably agree it's — what's the old adage? — penny wise, pound foolish. Most people who have served in government will have some interesting war stories about modest increases on some accounts that produced a far greater political headache than more substantial increases elsewhere.

One interesting thing about cabinet government is that it forces the minister to come before colleagues, and you just never know; maybe the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs has a view about something going on in the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations, or maybe the Minister of Finance has a view about something in the Ministry of Natural Resources because she will understand something about an impact in northern Ontario or downtown Toronto that will be rather lost on the overburdened minister, who may not have been properly briefed.

I remember when I was at education I was set up — not set up; that's not a fair assessment. There was a little



change around a fee that had a particularly disproportionate effect on northern Ontario, and nobody bothered to tell me. It was just lucky that I found out from a helpful soul in Timmins that if I did this there was going to be a regional explosion. It was a very useful thing to be told. That often happened in a cabinet setting where colleagues could say, "This is going to have" — it's kind of like Bradley warning those of us who'd never been on a municipal council about the sinkhole that was the regulation of retail store hours. I hate to say it publicly, but he was more right than some of us ever wanted to admit. That is being changed here. The individual minister is being given more authority to make those changes, and if you are the kind of weather-vane politician like the current minister of consumer affairs, there will be no problem. But if you lack his resourcefulness and his sensitivity to the public mood, then the government of which you're a part might find itself somewhat besieged by — remember John White? Remember the day that John White announced —

**Mr Bradley:** "Wear a sweater."

**Mr Conway:** "Wear a sweater." Well, I'll tell you, the Tory caucus of the day just about took — John White was not a stupid man. He completely misread the impact of a measure, particularly on rural and northern folks, and I'd like to have been at that government caucus meeting, I'll tell you. He backed off. He backed off faster than Darcy McKeough backed off a few years later. I don't mean just to pick on my Tory friends, because those mistakes have been made by governments of all kinds. Part of the benefit of cabinet government is that before those kinds of apparently incidental and trifling matters are decided, a few other politicians whose job is to bring a political judgement to bear on those kinds of changes get to pass judgement, and smart politicians make sure that in the year leading up to an election there aren't going to be people out there in Brampton or St Catharines or Carleton county being reminded that fees are being increased noticeably.

I mentioned the other day, I got my motor vehicle registration renewal in the mail the other day and I have to check but, God, does that look like it is going through the roof. Sixty-six bucks for one year?

**Hon Mr Jackson:** Sixty-six bucks?

**Mr Conway:** Well, that's what mine says, or \$132 for two years. I may have misread it.

**Mr Flaherty:** It's a big car.

**Mr Conway:** It's not a big one. It's a pretty basic piece of transportation. My only point, I say to the member for Durham Centre, is I'm going to do a little tracking. I'm going to just, say, take that car — and for me to notice, I'm about the worst consumer I know. You don't want people like me making those judgements in an election year. I'm going to do a little check to see just what the history of that motor vehicle registration cost would be over, say, a 10-year period. But \$132 for two years? That seems to be significant. I may be just losing my touch, but the point is you don't want those kinds of increases.

I see the Minister of Finance for Ontario, just to digress for a moment, went to Fredericton. Was I the only one who noticed the Minister of Finance for Ontario quoted in the public press the other day saying, "That Canada

pension plan, I don't know," as to whether or not that death benefit, \$3,750 worth of "subsidy," was an appropriate subsidy in this day and age. I suspect not very many people saw that, but it's that kind of thinking that, before it becomes policy, I suspect that people in cabinet and caucus would probably want to pass some judgement upon. Because, for example, if that little adjustment were to be made as public policy by the Ontario government, I have a feeling that in Sarnia and in Hastings and in Hamilton the phones would start to ring rather quickly when the local chapter of the AARP figured out that \$3,750 worth of benefit provided under the Canada pension plan was going to be discontinued.

Speaking about our friend the minister of consumer protection, who is here tonight, at the rate he's going he's going to have no job at all. No greater bravery hath any politician than to organize and vote for his own redundancy, and I must say to my friend Mr Sterling that the red tape review panel looks like it is on its way to making the ministry of elevators and boiler inspections —

**Mr Bradley:** Amusement devices.

**Mr Conway:** Normie, are you still responsible for the stuffed articles act?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** Oh, yes. Every time I look over at Bradley, I think of it.

**Mr Conway:** That's not a bad line, Normie, at this time of the night.

**Mr Bradley:** Don't ask him what he thinks of amusement devices, though.

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**Mr Conway:** I was looking at that. There's an interesting article I was reading, as I do quite frequently, in the Cardoza review about the regulation of amusement devices. In my infirmity here, I can't seem to find it. Here it is, a very interesting article in the Cardoza Arts and Entertainment Law Journal, volume V, 1986: a fascinating article about the regulation of the amusement industry in the United States. It turns out not to be particularly relevant to the discussion tonight, although it's an interesting look at the whole question of regulation.

I know I'm probably stretching it a bit, but this red tape review panel is just right out of Washington. When I heard the redoubtable member for Lincoln launch his campaign, I thought, God, it's a peculiar mix of Al Gore and Newt Gingrich. In fact, the nomenclature is just remarkably plagiarized. It's just chapter, paragraph, phraseology out of Washington within the last few years and, to be fair, not exclusively Republican, because Mr Gore, the current Vice-President, had a mandate from President Clinton to do something of the same in the US federal administration. I find it interesting, particularly in the United States, because it is a very strong legacy of the Reagan era that there was just too much government: "We've got to back away. We've got to give the economy room to move and room to breathe."

I don't doubt, as I said earlier, that there are regulatory intrusions that are not very sensible and not very helpful, and using my hangman example of a while ago, in some cases totally beyond justification.

I want to just remind people, particularly those people who would argue, "Just let's back away; let the market decide" — in fact, I listened with care to an earlier



comment made by the member for Lincoln, the architect, the driver of the so-called red tape train. Those of you who follow American politics will remember one of the truly enormous scandals of the history of the American Republic. It's the savings and loan fiasco: hundreds of billions of dollars of, in the end, charges against the public purse of America, a total ripoff.

People wonder where regulation comes from. I'm not here to argue for strangling any economy with undue burden and undue regulation, but for people who want to talk about, "Let's just let a thousand flowers bloom; let's just lift the yoke of government regulation," I want people to remember the savings and loan. If I were an American taxpayer, I would want, as a minimum, a court martial.

**Mr Flaherty:** Is it Bill Clinton?

**Mr Conway:** Actually, it's not Bill Clinton, I say to the member for Durham Centre, but it was the Keating Five. There were a number of very prominent senators —

**Mr Flaherty:** We'll see if the evidence comes out.

**Mr Conway:** I'm not talking about Whitewater. That's separate. I'm talking about the major part of — the Resolution Trust Corp, you have a point. The situation with the Madison Guaranty business is a valid point. I think the book by Mr Stewart, *Blood Sport*, if you haven't read it, is a pretty serious indictment, probably more of Mrs Clinton than it is of the current President. Madison Guaranty was certainly not one of the major ones, although it was interesting in the Stewart book about Whitewater. There was an incredible figure, and I can't remember it, but in the Dallas office of the Resolution Trust Corp, which covered I think east Texas and Arkansas, a relatively small piece of south-central America, the obligations to the American treasury as a result of failed S&Ls was something like \$55 billion. Unbelievable.

I'm not here arguing for intrusive government. My instinct now is just — I won't use the phrase that one of my American friends uses, "Sue the" — you just say, "I'm not paying; I am not, as a citizen of America, going to pay for the hundreds of billions of dollars." Because the crooks are all gone. Who pays the bill? I pay the bill as a taxpayer. I'm not talking about chicken-feed.

**Mr Bradley:** Where were the regulators in this instance?

**Mr Conway:** Where were the regulators? The member for Durham Centre makes a good point. If you haven't read *Blood Sport*, get it, because you'll probably feel even stronger in your point than you might realize. Where were the regulators? All I'm saying is that I don't want to pay. Don't stick me with the bill. The experience I've gotten in government is that the bills tend to end up on my doorstep, and they're often put there at a time, in a way and at a place where I can't do much about it. The fiasco, the mess is made, and now what are you going to do? Are you going to tell all of these defenceless people that there's no protection?

This business of deposit insurance is certainly another subject that, while it's not particularly germane to this, raises the question to another level. My point is that regulation is there for a public purpose. If you are one of those people who believes, "Just let the market go, let it work its magic and" — I forget the phrase that the

member for Lincoln used; it was quite a fetching phrase. But for those people who live in the real world, I don't know that it's going to solve all of the problems.

Again, to use an American example, how many of you have been following the recent post-mortem about ValuJet? I saw in the New York Times yesterday that the former chairperson of the Federal Aviation Administration had some delicious — that's the wrong word — had some not very good things to say about what was going on with the Federal Aviation Administration.

**Mr Douglas B. Ford (Etobicoke-Humber):** They all have hindsight.

**Mr Conway:** But 110 people are dead.

**Mr Ford:** I realize that, but it takes one nasty accident to have hindsight.

**Mr Bradley:** Where were the regulators? That's the whole question. You want to get rid of the regulators? That's what happens.

**Mr Ford:** The FAA wasn't doing its job.

**Mr Conway:** Fair enough, but — and this is not a criticism of the current government, because it wasn't its doing — what do you think people feel like when they watch on the nightly news that trucks are rolling down the highway and tires are flying off and you've got OPP people saying, "This is really getting bad"? There is a connection that some people make between deteriorating safety and deregulation of the trucking industry.

I'm listening to my friend the Minister of Transportation and watching the Canadian and American news. I must say it is not an especially comforting thought to me, because I spend so much time on the highway, to hear these reports. It may be an isolated incident.

Interestingly, in the American literature there is a new book by a professor of business at the Harvard Business School looking at regulation and deregulation in four American sectors: airlines, natural gas and a couple of others I can't remember. It's quite recent. He comes to some rather interesting conclusions, that both regulation and deregulation produced some rather unintended results.

**Mr Ford:** And volume.

**Mr Conway:** Well, I haven't done the work, but it's an interesting piece of work from one of the most distinguished business schools in the world and it deals with the question of regulation and deregulation.

My observation is that there is a public interest, and we have an obligation to make sure that the public interest is protected by timely and efficient regulation. Some of what is contained in this package seems to be entirely sensible.

But let me come back to one specific point in the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations. It relates to something I was saying earlier tonight about another bill we dealt with, Bill 59. We were talking about automobile insurance. I'm not any expert, but with the minister here, let me just make the point. The Motor Vehicle Repair Act is being changed and it's no longer going to be the case that the government of Ontario will dictate the size, the form and the style of signs that must be posted in a conspicuous place by automobile repair shops for prospective customers.

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On the face of it, that's not a great threat, but we all know, I presume, that there is no greater locus for fraud



than in that business. I'm not saying they're all fraud artists, far from it, but who among us has not had the experience of taking our car into a repair shop and the first words — I think Bradley said it earlier tonight — the first question is: "Mr Sterling, are you paying or is insurance paying?" If you've got a vehicle like our illustrious Speaker, I can assure you the bill might vary by several hundreds, perhaps thousands of dollars.

The point of changes made over the last few years was to try in the marketplace to put some discipline so that consumers would have some ability to bring pressures to bear against a not very healthy instinct that most of us have experienced.

I don't know whether this streamlining is going to do the following, but it would be very interesting to see whether or not the Bradley garage in downtown Virgil, Niagara region, might say, "I've got to meet the requirement, so I'm going to take my little sign and have a little, microscopic postcard back behind the acetylene torch over near the washroom." It's there. If you can find it, welcome to it. It'll give you all the relevant information. I don't know whether it's going to allow that.

My point is that the sanction in the Motor Vehicle Repair Act is, as I remember it, to try to give some reasonable consumer protection, to provide a counterweight to the natural instinct that unscrupulous dealers sometimes will not be able to resist, namely, "I'm going to stick it to good old Sterling because, even if he doesn't like it, he's going to have to pass that off to the consumer." Maybe I'm reading more into this than I should be.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** You are.

**Mr Conway:** I hope I am, but I'm from Missouri now, Normie. I don't necessarily just take the blandishments of cabinet ministers at face value, whether they're Tory, Liberal or New Democratic, because I've no reason to believe that the cabinet minister knows whereof he speaks. I know what he or she might intend, but whether you are delivering what you are promising is another matter.

Yes, let's clean away the cobwebs, let us streamline in ways that are sensible, but let us not buy into the notion that by simply throwing away most of these regulations we are going to have a better society because people, often with very significant, powerful commercial interests, are going to ever and always make judgements that are going to protect the public interest or give adequate weight to the interests of the consuming public.

**The Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** Because the member referred to my ministry I just want to respond to him in a brief manner because we're going on in time. With regard to his balance between written regulations and how to protect the public, these bills are put forward to try to balance our ability to enforce what we have in writing. In other words, there is no sense in asking itinerant sellers to register in this province if that cannot be practically done. We have determined and the Provincial Auditor has determined that it is not practical to do it under a province act, under a provincial authority, therefore we are wiping that out.

He talked about repair shops which in the past have been required to post signs to point out where the local Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations office is so that a consumer can go to that office and complain

about a service he might or might not have received at that shop. Mr Conway, we're doing away with that because we no longer have local offices for the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations and haven't had them for some five, 10 or 15 years; I'm not sure how long.

That is why we're doing away with regulations. We're doing away with regulations because it is no longer practical to carry them out in terms of what is done here. If you can't do a good job of enforcing what regulations you have on the books, in my view you're better to take them off the books and not trick the consumer to think you can do something that you can't do.

For a lot of these regulations and laws we have passed the time when they are really relevant. Those are my responses to the member's speech this evening.

**Mr Bradley:** The member for Renfrew North made a compelling argument for the entire cabinet looking at the proposed fee increases and other changes that, as a result of this legislation, will be left in the hands of a single minister. He made reference to previous experiences in cabinet, and I well recall informing the Liberal cabinet how unwise it would be, when the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations was advocating an increase in birth certificate fees and what the ramifications would be for those who had children playing hockey, baseball, soccer or many other sports, as well as other people who required a birth certificate, because there were always those in the ministry who thought it was good idea to raise those funds so that somehow the ministry might be allowed to keep those funds if the ministry was able to gain this new revenue. The political wisdom of doing that was somewhat dubious, and I used to suggest to them that they would be picking an unnecessary fight for very little good reason.

My second comment is about the response of the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations to the member for Renfrew North when he said, "You don't have to worry about where the put the signs on the repair shop now because the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations has no more local offices." I think we can project that first of all there will be no more Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations and, second, there will be no more consumer protection left, and that is a very sad commentary. This is something which people in this province have wanted, and for the minister to suggest now that the signs are no longer necessary is I think a hint of the future, that his job will be gone and the ministry will be gone, and I lament both.

**The Speaker:** Any further questions or comments? The member has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr Conway:** I want to say to the minister that on itinerant sellers you're absolutely right. I chose to not even engage the subject because you are so right that it doesn't need me to affirm the rightness of your cause there.

I noticed on my point about the Motor Vehicle Repair Act you raised the point, "Well, it's really because we don't have — " I really don't care whether or not on the sign there's any reference to the ministry of consumer protection, personally; that's the least of my worries. My understanding of the obligation is that the sign, however,



has got to give me as a consumer some useful information like labour costs and things that have to do with the posted rates of that place of business. That's what I care about, and if this provision basically —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Conway:** Listen, as a minister with a car and an Air Canada pass, I understand how these might not be major top-of-mind concerns for you today.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** I have neither.

**Mr Conway:** He has neither, and I am glad to hear that. My point in raising this is that if these slight changes allow a garage owner, for example, in some way to remove what previously was a requirement, a sign with some relevant consumer information — it's kind of like going into the Brewers Retail and finding the posted prices. They're there if you can find them at the bloody back of the warehouse. That bloody sign — you know, when I go to the Beer Store in Bancroft, I expect to see it where I see it, someplace where I can make reasonable use of its helpful information. That's my point. I don't expect, nor do I really even want, to know that I can phone the Honourable Norman Sterling. I have to look at that in every elevator I get into in the province now. I don't really worry about being able to call the minister of consumer protection, but I want to know that the consumer information is there and is not going to now be put off in some back corner.

**The Speaker:** Mr Tsubouchi has moved second reading of Bill 61. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

I declare the motion carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

**Mr Bradley:** No, it goes to committee.

**Ms Lankin:** It's going to committee.

**The Speaker:** Committee of the whole.

Mr Tsubouchi has moved second reading of Bill 63.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

I declare the motion carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

**Interjection:** No, committee of the whole House.

**The Speaker:** Committee of the whole.

Mr Tsubouchi has moved second reading of Bill 64.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

I declare the motion carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

**Interjection:** Committee of the whole.

**The Speaker:** Agreed? Agreed.

Mr Tsubouchi has moved second reading of Bill 65. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

I declare the motion carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

**Interjections:** No.

**The Speaker:** Committee of the whole.

Mr Tsubouchi has moved second reading of Bill 66.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

I declare the motion carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

**Interjections:** No.

**The Speaker:** Committee of the whole.

Mr Tsubouchi has moved second reading of Bill 67.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

I declare the motion carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

**Interjections:** No.

**The Speaker:** Committee of the whole.

Mr Tsubouchi has moved second reading of Bill 68.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

I declare the motion carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

**Interjections:** No.

**The Speaker:** Committee of the whole.

Mr Tsubouchi has moved second reading of Bill 69.

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

I declare the motion carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

**Interjections:** No.

**The Speaker:** Committee of the whole.

It being past 12 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow afternoon.

*The House adjourned at 0004.*

## ERRATA

No.	Page	Column	Line(s)	Should read:
94A	3915	1	26-7	disabilities. The Adapted Sport Technology Research Association, ASTRA, along with One Step Beyond, have
94A	3926	1	34	in the gallery, a former member, Mr Thomas Wardle.



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# Legislative Assembly of Ontario

First Session, 36th Parliament

# Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

## Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

## Journal des débats (Hansard)

Wednesday 26 June 1996

Mercredi 26 juin 1996



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Honourable Allan K. McLean

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L'honorable Allan K. McLean

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 26 June 1996

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 26 juin 1996

*The House met at 1332.  
Prayers.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### NORTHERN HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** In the northern Ontario safe roads survey results issued earlier this year, the Centre for Natural Resources Research and Information found that statistics based on the report by the medical trauma unit for northeastern Ontario found that the two-lane highways and narrow rock cuts of northern Ontario result in death.

Dr Gary Bota, the head of the trauma unit, found that motor vehicle collisions account for one third of all trauma in northern Ontario. Highway 69 accounted for an alarmingly high percentage of these deaths and non-intersection accidents accounted for 77% of deaths. Head-on collisions accounted for 44.1% of these deaths in northern Ontario. One of the recommendations for prevention from the report stated, "Avoid northern Ontario highways."

Minister Palladini, you have received thousands of postcards. You were supposed to respond to me and the concerns of the people of the Sudbury region by now. Tell the people of the Sudbury region you will reinvest in the environmental assessment for Highway 69 between Sudbury and the French River. Tell the Glasby family, who lost their daughter on February 24, 1996, at 32 years of age because of dangerous road conditions that caused her death, that you care. Tell them that you care for the people of the region of Sudbury. Reinvest in the environmental assessment process.

### ANDREAS PAPANDREOU

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale):** This past Sunday, the people of Greece, and indeed the world, lost one of their most beloved leaders, Andreas Papandreou.

The former Prime Minister was a charismatic, fiery orator who fought passionately for Greek independence and the right of the Greek people to control their own destiny. For that he paid a price. He spent many years in exile, the last five of which he spent in Toronto teaching at York University. A Toronto newspaper headline at the time, referring to his appointment, said, "York Nets a Big Fish."

During his time in Toronto, Greek Canadians and many others came to know and love him, as well as his then wife, Margarita, who was a constant partner with him in his fight for social justice.

Mr Papandreou was a committed social democrat and world-renowned Harvard-trained economist who believed

passionately in social and economic equality for all men and women. Returning to become Prime Minister of Greece, he reformed almost every aspect of Greek domestic policy to ensure a better quality of life for all people. He brought in a medicare system, a modern labour code, enshrined the equality of women and much, much more.

Although he will be missed in the struggle for social justice in Canada, Greece and throughout the world, the legacy of Andreas Papandreou will live on.

On behalf of the New Democratic Party caucus, I extend our sincere sympathies to his family and his many, many colleagues and friends across the world.

### EVENTS IN PORT CARLING

**Mr Bill Grimmatt (Muskoka-Georgian Bay):** It's my privilege this weekend to participate in a very special event in my riding marking the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the incorporation of the village of Port Carling.

Contrary to popular belief, Port Carling was not named after a beer. It was named after Sir John Carling, a visitor to the village in 1869. He was a friend from London visiting the postmaster, Benjamin Hardcastle Johnston.

In 1862, these two gentlemen became the first tourists to visit the centre that is now Port Carling. At that time, travellers pulled their canoe over the rapids and into the Indian River and continued on their journey.

These days, Port Carling has much more to offer, and instead of being just a portage on a longer journey, has become a major tourist destination.

The locks form only one part of Port Carling's rich marine heritage. Two other Port Carling traditions which cannot go unmentioned are the majestic steamships and the tradition of classic boat building.

Today, Port Carling and all of the Muskoka Lakes have become a year-round destination offering excellent accommodations, dining and shopping and recreation activities.

I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the efforts of the Port 100 Planning Committee and the Muskoka Lakes Museum for organizing and promoting a variety of community events which celebrate our rich cultural roots and make this centennial year one to remember.

I'd like to extend an open invitation to all members to attend this weekend's parade and centennial festivities in Port Carling.

### SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION

**Mrs Sandra Papatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** I'd like to direct my statement today to the Minister of Education, where I'd like to speak to the issue of none other than the



portables at Sacred Heart/Sacré-Coeur in LaSalle in my riding.

The Minister of Education has had his treatment of this issue of portables in Ontario; it can be described as inept, at best. The minister's actions are causing boards across Ontario to needlessly spend hundreds of thousands of dollars forcing them to buy portables where they're required because of the moratorium he has placed on capital funding where it's required across Ontario.

In a letter that I addressed to the minister earlier this month, I have yet to receive a reply, but the letter specifically requests that he reconsider his decisions on the moratorium on capital funding. It's causing school boards to double-spend the very little taxpayers' money that they have now.

There are many examples of this across Ontario, but just typical: "Portables now occupy a playing field where the boys once played football. The student population has more than doubled but we have less area than ever for them to practise the sports we think are essential to their growth."

We think that there are many examples across Ontario where education, because of the portables, is absolutely substandard. We would like the minister to reconsider his decision on the moratorium and specifically think of Sacred Heart/Sacré-Coeur in LaSalle.

1340

#### FOODSERVICES STAFF

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** In July 1995, Mike Harris walked on to the stage at Queen's Park. His first act was to take 22% out of the income of the poorest and most vulnerable among us, like the bully walking into the school yard and picking on the weakest and the smallest and pummeling the hell out of him just to set the tone, to send a message. Ontario was shocked into the reality of what they had voted for on that day.

Today, 22 people in this place, foodservices workers, have got fired and so the melodrama continues, the play with the message. Anna, with 18 years' experience, who fed us all here so well and for so long asks now, "Who will feed me?" Tim, with two children and a pregnant wife, what's he to do? And why, you may ask, and we ask, why are we doing this? To send a message, to make a point, political grandstanding at its best on the backs of the poor, on the working class.

Is it going to save money? We don't know. Is it going to give better service? No. Does it send a message? You're damn right it does: If you're poor and a worker in this province, you're just so much grist for the mill. If you're rich and powerful, how can we help you? My condolences to those who have been fired today. We're going to miss you. You did a great job. Mike Harris, you ought to be ashamed of yourself, but we're not going to let you get away with it. The people of this province are not —

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** The member's time has expired.

#### TAX REDUCTION

**Mr Rob Sampson (Mississauga West):** I rise today with mixed emotions to mention that today, June 26, is

tax freedom day for Ontarians. The good news is that starting today until the end of the year, the average Ontarian will get to keep their hard-earned money. The bad news is that the average Ontarian has spent nearly the first half of this year working to pay their tax bill—

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** Why don't you let the cafeteria workers keep their jobs? Why did you cut those of cafeteria workers?

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** The member for Welland-Thorold, come to order.

**Mr Sampson:** Ontario, considered the nation's economic engine, has the ninth latest tax freedom day in the country. Only British Columbia's tax freedom day is later. By comparison, the earliest tax freedom day is in PEI and it falls on May 28.

I am happy to announce that there is relief in sight. Starting Monday, July 1, Ontarians will see the first instalment of their income tax cut. This cut will ensure that tax freedom day in future years occurs earlier and that hard-working, honest taxpayers in Ontario will get to keep more of what they earn.

#### PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Orlino):** Once again the Minister of Health has been caught with his foot in his mouth. His less-than-accurate rhetoric yesterday has alienated seniors and the associations that speak for them.

In response to a question I asked the minister about the Harris government's broken promises, his plan to bring in new user fees for the Ontario drug benefit program, the minister suggested that the leaders of the Canadian Association of Retired Persons and Jane Leitch, a leader of the Senior Citizens' Consumer Alliance, don't object to his new user fees. He went further to suggest that seniors "don't mind paying a few dollars to be generous to their fellow citizens."

Well, today the truth. The Ontario Coalition of Senior Citizens' Organizations held a press conference voicing their concerns with this minister's new user fees. They said this morning that seniors are worried they will have to choose between buying food or the prescriptions they need because of the Harris-Wilson new user fee plan.

I told the minister yesterday, and it was restated this morning, that seniors are confused about the implementation process. Sick people in long-term care facilities are worried about how this is going to affect them. The disabled and those who care about people who suffer with mental illness are all very worried and they are scared about the effects of the new user fees for drugs.

Mr Speaker, will you ask the minister to admit that he was wrong, admit he made a mistake and scrap his user fee plan and apologize to —

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Time has expired.

#### FOODSERVICES STAFF

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** This government during its ideological quest to privatize the province has now turned its attention towards the foodservices provided here in the Legislature. By privatizing the dining



room, one of three things will happen: prices will go down, prices will remain the same or prices will go up.

If prices go down because of privatization, you have to ask yourself, why? To give the Tory MPPs a cheaper lunch? Is that what it's all about? It's happening because the workers' wages will go from \$17 an hour down to \$7.25 an hour so they can have cheaper lunches.

If the prices stay the same, why should the government make the workers take a pay cut of over 50% and lose benefits just to maintain the status quo? If the prices increase, then where are the savings this government says will happen?

This privatization plan was brought forward to reduce the deficit of the foodservices operation. Reducing the deficit is not bad. I wouldn't like to think it can't be done. However, the foodservices employees were willing to work with the assembly to find a more humane way to solve the deficit problem, not just slashing wages. But this government looked at the bottom line only, not at the people involved.

The Tories rejected any idea that things could change in a humane way. They only want privatization and to drive workers' wages down. That is why I stand today to condemn the Tory and the Liberal parties for voting and approving this privatization plan.

#### PENSION REFORM

**Mr Tim Hudak (Niagara South):** I'd like to let the members know that tomorrow we will be presenting to the Minister of Finance the Ontario report on public consultations on the Canada pension plan.

Since April, my colleague Ed Doyle of Wentworth East and I have been seeking public input on how to ensure that the CPP is sustainable for our future and the futures of our children and our grandchildren.

Without a doubt the CPP is of great importance to Ontarians and that is why we encouraged the widest possible participation in the process. Ed and I held public consultations in my riding of Port Colborne, Ontario, London, Windsor, Sudbury, Barrie, Peterborough and Kingston. We also participated in the joint federal-provincial consultations in Toronto, in Ed's riding in Hamilton and in Thunder Bay. A toll-free line was also available for people to call in their views, and we invited submissions and e-mail messages as well.

Overall, participants agree that the CPP should be maintained, that contributions should remain affordable, that benefits should provide adequate financial security and should be better administered and that there should be fairness among generations. We'd like to see the CPP assets invested with a balanced approach, and in Canada, to maximize the rate of return with a moderate risk.

The government continues to listen to the views of Ontarians as we hold our discussions with the other provinces and the federal government on the future of the CPP.

I want to thank my colleague Ed Doyle of Wentworth East for his excellent work and for all those who —

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** The member's time has expired.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** Mr Speaker, I'm rising on a point of order because I know

the members of the assembly would wish to welcome Dr Simon and Mrs Andrea Robarts in the gallery with their family, Jeffrey Adam and their newly chosen baby, Sachel, from China, and we welcome them very warmly.

**The Speaker:** The member does not have a point of order, but we certainly welcome them.

1350

#### PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

**Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'm asking on a point of order for direction from you of how our caucus and how members of the assembly can ask questions here with respect to a decision that was made that we believe is totally wrong. I refer to the matter of the privatization of foodservices, and in particular, the cafeteria and the dining room, what that has done to people in our province and individuals whom all of us have known very well.

Mr Speaker, you're the chair of the Board of Internal Economy. Therefore, you brought forward the proposal to privatize the foodservices in this place. But Mr Speaker, you also know of course that the members of the Conservative caucus, your caucus, pushed this proposal forward and voted in favour of it. There's not a cabinet minister we can ask a question of because you're the one who has to be held accountable for this decision. We think it was a dead wrong decision, a decision that is inhumane and has hurt individuals by cutting their wages by 50% in order to accommodate privatization.

The Board of Internal Economy meetings are private meetings, they're secret meetings, they're not public, yet the dollars that are involved and the decisions that are involved are public decisions and we think you should be held accountable for those decisions. So I want to know, Mr Speaker, how we hold you accountable, how we bring forward the cases of individual people who have been hurt by this decision, how we ask questions about the savings that you say are going to occur that we know could have occurred through other alternatives without privatization, without slashing wages by a quarter of a million dollars. How do we hold you accountable?

Mr Speaker, on a final point, I'd like to ask you whether you would appear this afternoon at the Legislative Assembly committee to answer questions, to be held accountable for this decision.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** I've heard the member's point of order and I will report back to him tomorrow in question period.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** On the same point of order?

**Mr Hampton:** No, on a related point of order. The fact of the matter is that the government has chosen a policy direction. That policy direction is one of privatization. The privatization has as its goal the reduction of workers' wages. The minister responsible for Management Board has said that a number of government functions will be privatized, that he expects that when those functions are performed by the private sector, they will cost less, and we believe they will cost less because wages will be reduced.



In the case of this Legislature, I think we ought to be able to ask questions of the Chair of Management Board because this is an execution of government policy. This is an implementation of government policy and the government should be held accountable for it.

**The Speaker:** Order. You can ask a question in question period with regard to the government's policies. You're quite free to do that. I have heard your point of order and I said I will report back tomorrow.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** A point of order on a related point of order, Mr Speaker: If the Speaker's advice is that we should ask a question, perhaps the Speaker could give us direction as to which minister of the crown, which member of the treasury bench, this question might be addressed to so that we will not find ourselves ruled out of order by putting a question which is not in order.

**The Speaker:** I told the member for Windsor-Sandwich that I would report back to him tomorrow on his point of order.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** Speaker, I rise on a matter of privilege under sections 21(a) and (b) with regard to my right as a member of this Legislature representing the people of Hamilton Centre to put questions that relate to the implementation of this government's policy, particularly as it affects the dedicated men and women who work in this building down in the restaurant who provided honourable service and have been treated in a despicable fashion.

Speaker, I demand that you allow me my right and privilege to put questions to this government. There are only two days left in this session. Sir, I ask you to tell me now how I go about putting that question today so that I can hold this government accountable for the atrocities that are happening to these men and women right here in this building.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** Mr Speaker, on a related point of order, I think this is an issue that bears some immediate attention. The actions that have been taken as a result of the actions of the Board of Internal Economy to privatize the foodservices are impacting people now, not tomorrow and not the next day; they're impacting people now, as we speak.

I think, Mr Speaker, it would behoove you to give us some direction on how we can deal with this either in holding you accountable or in holding the government members accountable who were the majority that voted, as I understand together with the Liberal Party representative on this, to carry out this privatization that among other things is resulting in people I represent losing their jobs. So I need to know, as an individual member of this Assembly, how I can raise their concerns and where I can raise their concerns. That is a fundamental issue of privilege and it's also a fundamental question of order in terms of how this place operates.

I would urge you, Mr Speaker, to give us an answer on that, and if you're not able to give us an answer now, to recess the House for a period of time to consult with whoever you have to consult, and to bring us back an answer so that we know how to proceed from this moment on.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: Please, there's some urgency to

this; 22 plus people's lives are being destroyed because of the economic violence of this government. You were the tool of a very partisan decision. You are accountable and you are not questionable. You have to permit us to question these government members about their sacrifice of 22 hardworking women and men in our foodservices whose lives are being destroyed, whose futures are being dashed and who are being dealt with in the most cruel and obscenely treacherous manner. This government has swinishly and despicably attacked hardworking women and men who deserve far better treatment.

This House deserves an opportunity to obtain some redress for those women and men in our foodservices. Damn it, Speaker, you'd better start responding, because we've got 22 people downstairs who depend on somebody doing something for them, and we're not going to tolerate this attack on them. These government members earning \$80,000 a year are going to have a job on Monday. Those foodservices workers earning a pittance —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. I'll recess the House for 15 minutes and report back.

*The House recessed from 1358 to 1413.*

**The Speaker:** Matters that arise out of the administration of the Office of the Assembly and that are decided by the Board of Internal Economy are not matters that can be the subject of question period. The principal reason for this is that no member of the cabinet is responsible for these matters. These matters are the responsibility of the Board of Internal Economy, and members from all parties sit on that board. As Speaker Warner indicated in his ruling of December 12, 1991, all questions on such matters "should be raised with the board or with the Speaker, instead of in the House."

Therefore I would invite honourable members who have questions to come and see me or make representation to board members. However, according to the traditions of this House, I cannot allow such questions during question period.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** Mr Speaker, a point of order.

**The Speaker:** A new point of order?

**Ms Lankin:** Yes. Mr Speaker, I realize I can't challenge your ruling. The very reason why we raised the questions of privilege and order today were in fact to seek direction on how this issue might be dealt with and might be resolved in a manner in which there is public attention that is shed on this issue — these workers will be gone within two days — and also an opportunity for all members of this Legislature, because the administration of this Legislature is done on behalf of the members of the Legislative Assembly.

We have no opportunity, as you have indicated, to question the government, even though we know this action is being taken directly as a result of government policy. We have no opportunity to question you in a public manner, you who are the officer of this Legislative Assembly responsible for the administration. We have a Board of Internal Economy in which the members of that internal economy board are dominated by members of the government, who were supported by members of the



Liberal Party in terms of the membership of that board, voted against by the member for the New Democratic Party.

We know, however — Mr Speaker, I have a question — there are members of the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party who disagree with the position their representatives on the Board of Internal Economy took, as well as the members of our caucus. We want an opportunity to debate this issue on the floor of the Legislature and I ask for unanimous consent —

**The Speaker:** Order. I have made my ruling. The member has asked for unanimous consent. Do we have unanimous consent? I hear no.

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker, I am very concerned as a member of the assembly. It's obvious to each and every one, with the highest of respect to you and your office, that this is a matter of public concern. Someone is responsible for economic assassination — nothing short of it. What we wish to know is not only who pulled the trigger, but what recourse, on behalf of the women and on behalf of the men, they have. Surely someone signs the cheque, someone has to be accountable and, Mr Speaker, in this case you have to carry the guilt.

**The Speaker:** Order. The next item of business is ministerial statements.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Yes, I've ruled.

**Mr Cooke:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I have concerns. I understand your ruling and I understand that we can't challenge your ruling, but I don't think it's acceptable that you would come back to the House and say that the way of dealing with this is to come into your office and have a chat.

We're talking about public accountability. The Board of Internal Economy meets in private. You are accountable to the members of the Legislature and the Legislative Assembly as a whole. I am concerned that this is becoming a systemic problem. There's this, there's the issue of security around this place, and, Mr Speaker, I am very concerned that there is no way of holding you accountable because your view is that we deal with this in your office in another secret way, which is unacceptable to this caucus.

**Mr Christopherson:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker, I was part of an advisory committee that looked into security matters that are also under your purview. You have total responsibility there, yet you recognized that the security of this place is an important responsibility for all of us and you struck that committee. Parts of it were in camera, but much of it was done in public, and the report itself that was issued was brought to this floor so that we could debate. In fact, that particular report, Speaker, had the unanimous support of all three caucuses, yet you saw fit, because of the importance of that issue, to bring it here on the floor of this Legislature so there could be public discussion, public understanding of what was involved here.

We are asking for no less on this issue. This is government policy that's in question. I sat in on one of these meetings last month, and although I wasn't allowed to vote I had voice and I expressed concern that the Tory

majority were implementing their agenda on other taxpayers and citizens of this province and that there was no real opportunity to look at alternatives.

There is much to be discussed here, Speaker. We think it's appropriate, as you did in the security matter, to allow us an opportunity, some method of discussing this issue in public, particularly where there are divisions even within caucuses, that this is a legislative matter. You, sir, have attempted to provide as much openness as you can, this government has said they care about openness, yet what we see here is closed-door deal-making, secret agreements, contracts being approved that take away the rights of workers who are here today watching, wondering, "Where are my rights?" All we seek from you, and what I seek from you, Speaker, as a member of this Legislature, is my right and privilege to debate that policy in public.

**The Speaker:** The member for Windsor-Riverside has asked if I would appear before the committee this afternoon and I would be very pleased to do that.

**Mr Silipo:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I just want to ask you to appear before the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly this afternoon. I just want to be sure that in fact the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly is scheduled to meet and will indeed meet this afternoon, because otherwise your undertaking doesn't mean very much, sir.

**The Speaker:** I'd be happy to go if the committee invites me to attend. I've said that.

1420

**Mr Cooke:** Mr Speaker, you've made that offer, and I think it's a good offer. May we have, to make sure it is carried off this afternoon, unanimous consent from the House that the Legislative Assembly committee will meet this afternoon and that this issue will be scheduled? That should be quite easy.

**The Speaker:** I will ask for unanimous consent. Do we have unanimous consent?

*Interjections.*

**Ms Lankin:** Oh, come on, so now you're muzzling the Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Order. We've dealt with the issue. Question period.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. I will withdraw my offer if that's what you want.

**Mr Hampton:** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: We seem to be in a conundrum here. We have raised points of order and points of privilege dealing with legitimate matters that affect this House. You have volunteered to yourself be held accountable. Now the government — I submit to you that this is the heart of the matter — does not want to be held accountable. The government doesn't want anybody to know about this. The government doesn't want people to know that it is cutting the wages of workers who make \$18 an hour now down to \$7 —

**Mr Pouliot:** Shame on the lot of you. How would you like it?

**The Speaker:** Order, the member for Lake Nipigon.

**Mr Pouliot:** At least I can defend myself; they cannot.

**The Speaker:** I will not warn the member for Lake Nipigon again.



**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: I wonder if you could help me with the ruling you made. You came back from the recess and said you would appear before the Legislative Assembly committee this afternoon. When my House leader asked for unanimous consent to have the Legislative Assembly committee meet, the Tory members said no. You then stood in your place and said, "Well, then, I'll withdraw my offer."

It's very clear to those of us in opposition that you sat there, got your direction from the Tory Party, not from the assembly as a whole, from the Tory Party which put you there, took direction from them, because until they said no, you had agreed to appear before the Legislative Assembly committee. You had agreed to it. As soon as they said no, you withdrew your offer. You tell me whose tune you're dancing to, Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** If the committee invites me, I will be there.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr Cooke:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Now that the government House leader is back in the House, perhaps it would now be appropriate to ask again if there is unanimous consent for the Legislative Assembly committee to meet this afternoon and invite the Speaker to appear on this issue.

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker, and addressing the very comment the House leader for the third party has made: Committees structure and order their own business in this place. I certainly have no objection to the Legislative Assembly committee considering whatever it wants this afternoon, which is its regularly scheduled time to sit.

**Mr Cooke:** They are not meeting unless you say they can.

**Hon Mr Eves:** I hear the member for Windsor-Riverside. I find it passing strange that he who didn't want the Legislative Assembly committee to sit, and he's been telling me so for the last two months at every House leaders' meeting I've been to, now wants it to sit. You can't have it both ways.

I say to the members of the third party, they know very well that the Board of Internal Economy has representation from all three parties on it. As a matter of fact, the member for Windsor-Riverside happens to be the representative of their party on the board. They also know that the minutes of those meetings are made public. They also know that during the course of their government, when the member for Beaches-Woodbine, who was a member of the Board of Internal Economy — I don't once recall her saying, I don't recall them saying once in the four years that they were the government: "Oh, gee, we don't think the majority of members of the Board of Internal Economy should decide anything. We think it should all go to Leg Assembly."

I say, Mr Speaker, through you to them —

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** Did we fire 22 people, Ernie? Did we?

**Hon Mr Eves:** No, but I will say to you, you spent \$100 billion more than you had, just \$100 billion, that's all.

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** Mr Speaker, might I just make the following suggestion. It is the last week that we intend to sit. Pressures do tend to become a bit more evident at this time of the year. You, in good faith —

*Interjections.*

**Mr Conway:** Well, listen, I'm telling you I know the problems that we — and there's a very legitimate concern on behalf of a lot of people who work in this place who are being prejudiced by actions taken by the Board of Internal Economy. In an effort to try to resolve this, because I'd rather get it resolved now and spend two or three hours getting it resolved this afternoon than spend three or five or eight painful days this week and next to get to the same result. So might I make this suggestion: You, Mr Speaker, in good faith made an offer to attend at the Legislative Assembly committee today. I would submit that it would be a very beneficial thing and I say on behalf of my colleagues that we would be quite happy to have a meeting of the Legislative Assembly committee scheduled this afternoon so you, sir, could make an appearance to address the issue that is of concern to many members of this assembly.

I would simply say on behalf of my colleagues that I would ask again, on behalf of my colleagues, the government House leader to think seriously about this offer. I would strongly suggest, given your good offer, Mr Speaker, and the willingness of many to have that hearing this afternoon, for the government House leader and his colleagues in the Progressive Conservative caucus to agree that the Legislative Assembly committee meet this afternoon so you, sir, can appear before it to answer questions on the matter at hand.

**Mr Hampton:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: We really do need your help here. You have ruled that we cannot ask a member of the government a question about this issue, even though it has to do with the implementation of government policy. You have ruled that we can't ask a member of the government about that.

I will give you credit. You have offered to make yourself accountable before the committee, yet the government does not apparently want that mechanism of accountability to be exercised. Yet it seems to me, Speaker, at the end of the day this involves the implementation of government policy. It will, I would submit, affect the running of this House, and it seems to me that there ought to be a mechanism whereby there can be accountability on this measure. After all, Speaker, people do not have their wages cut from \$17 an hour to \$7 or \$8 an hour every day of the year. People do not have their hours cut, people do not lose their jobs this precipitously. And this directly relates to the government. There ought to be some way that this question can be addressed and that they can be held accountable for this.

**The Speaker:** Order. It's time for oral question period.

**Mr Christopherson:** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: I want to say to you in response to the ruling you've made, since I was one of the earlier ones requesting this of you, that I got a sense you were trying to help in offering yourself to appear before the committee. I don't know whether you knew or not the committee was meeting; that doesn't matter. I do, however, ask you, sir,



that if indeed you are sincere, as I believe you are, in wanting justice to be done, then I think justice says that some time today or tomorrow we need to look at this issue in a public way because they're out of work on Friday, and this House rises tomorrow afternoon or tomorrow evening.

1430

So I ask you, sir, to please, if you need to take another recess, find a way to do what you appear to want to do. Don't just give up, Speaker. You owe it to us as the minority in this place. We have rights. Without you we don't have those rights. We want to use those rights to speak on behalf of other people who have even fewer rights.

Right now, Speaker, it's all with you. The only way it can happen, sir, is if you find a way with the table officers to allow us merely the opportunity to discuss what we think is a grave injustice, a matter of government public policy in a public way. That's what I ask of you, sir. Please don't shrug your shoulders and say your hands are tied. You tried one option; it didn't work. Please, try another. I believe you're sincere, you want to help us, so I'm asking you to take a little time to do that.

This is an important issue, Speaker. One of those staff people is right there. There she is. That's whose job, that's whose life we're talking about. She has a right to have the policy that destroyed her life —

**The Speaker:** Order. It's time for oral question period.

**Mr Kormos:** A point of privilege.

**The Speaker:** I've heard your point of privilege and you do not have a point. You do not have a point.

**Mr Kormos:** You haven't heard this one, let me tell you. You tell Anna why she has no job.

**The Speaker:** Order. The member for Welland-Thorold, I will not warn him again to take his seat. The member take his seat. I won't warn you again.

**Mr Kormos:** You tell her why she has no job and where she's going to find work.

**The Speaker:** Sergeant — I'll have to name the member for — Mr Kormos. Take him out.

*Mr Kormos was escorted from the chamber.*

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: It says in the standing orders —

**The Speaker:** The member for Cochrane South take his seat. I won't warn the member for Cochrane South again.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** I will name the member for Cochrane South. Mr Bisson. Take him out.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** No. The member has been named.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. The member for London North, come to order.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr Bisson:** Speaker, I got up on a point of privilege, asking to be recognized on a point of privilege. I got up on that right. You must hear my point of privilege. It is a standing order, Speaker. You can't throw people out —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** I named him. The member has been named.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Would the member for Cochrane South —

**Mr Bisson:** I want a point of privilege. You can't kick me out for that. You're a joke. You're here to recognize the opposition as well as the government, not do their bidding. My God, I've seen everything in this place.

*Mr Bisson was escorted from the chamber.*

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** The House will recess for 10 minutes due to grave disorder.

*The House recessed from 1436 to 1446.*

**The Speaker:** The member for Windsor-Riverside on a point of order.

**Mr Cooke:** Mr Speaker, we're prepared, even though we're very concerned and upset at what has happened this afternoon and, more importantly, what's happening to the workers in the foodservices, to move on to question period. We would like the consent of the government House leader to move the clock back to 60 minutes.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed? Agreed.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### RENT REGULATION

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North):** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Your consultation paper is nothing more, as we have observed, than a landlord protection paper. You have shocked tenants by breaking a promise of the Mike Harris government that rent control will continue. Your plan ends rent control. It will take rental apartments out of the market. It will mean higher rents to tenants, not lower rents like you promised. Rents will increase.

When a tenant moves, that unit will be off rent control, leaving the landlord free to hike the rent as much as he can get away with. What we'll see is the skyrocketing of rents. Tenants will be forced to pay through the roof just to keep a roof over their heads. You haven't represented at all the interests of tenants, only landlords.

Do you expect us to believe your plan will lower rents? Do you think tenants can be fooled? Can you tell me how this plan will lower rents?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** As you know, we're putting this paper out for consultation to give everybody and all the stakeholders an opportunity to have input into the process. I can assure you that the proposal we put forward to the people of Ontario and the tenants and the landlords is a fair and balanced system, a system that is far better than anything that was in place when the Liberals were in power.

One of the things I can't understand is, if my friend across the way was so anxious to have this present rent control system in place, why did you vote against it?

**Mr Curling:** What nonsense are you talking about? What did I vote against? I voted against your plan there.



I just want to tell the minister himself that without dealing with the question, I was extremely surprised, Minister, to hear you say that your plan will encourage 20,000 rental units in Ontario, and that will be an increased choice of accommodation for tenants. The tenants won't be able to move due to your plan where as soon as they move, rents will be jacked up.

I would like to know which hat the minister pulled that number out of. What this province needs is more affordable rental apartments. Your plan encourages landlords to take their apartment buildings off the rental market and convert them to condos or demolish them altogether. Units will be disappearing from the marketplace under your plan faster than any replacement could possibly be built. This is a very sneaky and a very vicious attack on tenants.

I understand that you looked at the British Columbia model of so-called tenant protection for guidance in developing your plan. The British Columbia government has a study that proves there is no correlation between rent control legislation being in place or not being in place and that of builders building. I don't know why you would ignore the study.

Even builders say that rent control is not the reason they are not building. Phil Dewan of the Fair Rental Policy Organization of Ontario, Laverne Brubacher of the Ontario Home Builders' Association and many others have told me personally and said publicly as recently as yesterday that builders will not build if rent controls are lifted, as you've done. Why are you, Minister, the only one saying that builders will build more apartments under your new system?

**Hon Mr Leach:** I think I made it very clear yesterday, when we put our proposal forward, that rent control is only one issue that has to be addressed to entice the industry back into building more units.

We have to address, for example, the property assessment issue, which is totally unfair for tenants at the present time. Tenants are paying four times in the city of Toronto what a single-family-dwelling resident would pay. That has to be addressed.

Tax on building materials: If you're building a rental building the tax is 7%; on a condo it's 4%. Many of these issues don't make any sense. Why they weren't addressed before I do not understand, but we are going to address them.

**Mr Curling:** What you've done is attacked the most vulnerable in our society first. You have made sure that those who can't afford rents are being hit harder at the initial stage.

Why didn't you bring out a comprehensive plan and tell us that this is only one way? If you want to bring out a plan, bring out a plan.

What should I say to students in colleges and universities who are facing record tuition hikes and user fees under your government? Now students who live away from home and even adult students will be seeing skyrocketing rents. You have struck another blow on those students. You plan to create a crisis in student accommodation. Explain to me and to the thousands and thousands of students out there who are now faced with another Mike Harris attack on the vulnerable how to deal

with the skyrocketing rents you have put forward to them.

**Hon Mr Leach:** We haven't put rent increases before anybody — not students, not seniors, not anybody. What we've said is that anybody who remains in their unit will come under the same legislation that's in effect at the present time.

We're going to continue to consult with all the stakeholders to make sure that everybody has input into the process. We put in a system that protects sitting tenants to ensure that seniors can get away from the fearmongering that's been fed to them over the past couple of months by the parties across. If they remain in their units they have absolutely nothing to worry about.

#### YOUNG OFFENDERS

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** I have a question for the Solicitor General. I'd like to return to the Elgin-Middlesex affair. As you know, for weeks now we've been asking you when you knew about the alleged beatings and what you did about that situation. We've asked you why you didn't know when a mother had made repeated calls to your office about her concern for the safety of her child.

You said there was only one call to your office and you also said a secretary took that call and referred it to the appropriate officials in your ministry, but it's interesting to note that this call was mentioned in a briefing note to you about this situation. Now we know that the mother made over seven calls from March 4 to March 27 and talked to someone in your office for a total of 30 minutes over that time.

I'd like to quote to you some things the mother said she said to your people in your office: "I was begging for help. I told them the boys were beaten. I was trying to get them all moved out of there. I said, 'Put them up north, put them anywhere, just get them out of there; they aren't safe.'"

Minister, I'd like to know who on your staff this mother talked to and why you're still telling us today that nobody on your staff told you about this for three months.

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** I have complete confidence in my ministerial staff, personal staff; this has been discussed with them on a number of occasions and they've assured me that no such call was received in our office.

**Mr Ramsay:** I have sent over to you a copy of a medical record of one young offender who was transferred from Bluewater to Elgin-Middlesex. I refer you to that medical record I've just sent over to you. You will note that the first entry where the YO was seen was five days after the transfer, and this notation states, "The young offender said he was assaulted when brought to the facility." It goes on, and the nurse describes the bruising around his eye.

I have raised with you repeatedly my concern about the possibility of tampering with evidence. We know you sent officials to Elgin-Middlesex the weekend after you officially found out in this House about the alleged



incident. Since then we've had complaints that maybe shredding and the confiscation of evidence took place over that weekend of activity down at the institution.

Minister, can you assure me today that the original of this medical record exists and that it is accessible to the London police in their investigation?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I'm not sure how the member would expect me to have that kind of detail surrounding a police investigation and an internal investigation. I'm not involved in those operational matters. I've indicated on numerous occasions that the police are investigating thoroughly the criminal allegations, and the internal investigation will look at all other matters surrounding this issue.

**Mr Ramsay:** I hope that tomorrow you can give me assurances — I've given you that copy — that you could match that up with the original and give us assurances that the police would be notified of it so that at least they could check. If you don't want to be directly involved, give it to them and ask them to verify what the original involves.

You told us that you also have initiated an internal investigation of this matter. A member of that team is the head of the operational review and audit branch of your ministry and is a member of the OPP. I have expressed concern before that it would be impossible for the internal investigation to be complete as it could lead to you and your office. I also questioned how you, the top cop of the province, could be investigated by your own internal investigation.

Minister, I believe you might be shuffled in three weeks' time to cover this up, but whether or not you're there, I ask you today, will you allow the OPP to question you and your staff should they feel it's necessary to complete their investigation?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I've said on numerous occasions that all concerns surrounding this matter will be thoroughly investigated by the independent investigation team, and I have complete confidence in the integrity and independence of the OPP.

## RENT REGULATION

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. We've just seen today the government's real agenda: It's to lower the wages of working people, and the vehicle is privatization.

There's another example, rent control, of how your government intends to take money from working families and give that money to those people who already have wealth and power.

Yesterday when we said rents will go up, you said that higher rents would get the industry to come back and build more buildings. In effect, you said you want to use higher rents to bribe the industry. But yesterday the main landlords' lobby group said your package will not "create a climate for private sector job creation, investment and economic renewal." They say they won't build; they say they want more incentives. That means tenants' rents will go up and we won't see any more apartment buildings.

Minister, will you admit that your attempt to bribe landlords into building more apartments has failed and

that tenants will pay higher rents and get nothing in return?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I think I should ask the leader of the third party to listen to the previous questions, because it's the same question the critic for the Liberal Party asked.

I said quite clearly that rent control is only one issue that's going to have to be addressed to entice people back into building rental accommodation. Last year in Metropolitan Toronto only 20 rental units were built, when we have need for thousands of rental units; 60,000 people a year move into Metropolitan Toronto and absolutely no accommodation is being provided for them. This situation has to be addressed and this proposal will address that situation.

1500

**Mr Hampton:** I listen to the minister trot this kind of nonsense around and I want to quote for the minister somebody who really does know something about the commercial real estate market. I'm going to quote a March 10 comment from a Mr Schwartz, who is an apartment specialist with the commercial broker J.J. Barnicke. This is what he had to say. He said this publicly:

"Apartment buildings have been one of the hottest real estate plays in the greater Toronto area during the past year. With a low down payment, apartment buyers can make a return of better than 15% on their equity."

He then went on to say: "Rent control hasn't been a problem. Landlords long ago learned to live with rent controls." That's somebody who really knows about the apartment situation.

When people in the private apartment business talk to each other, they acknowledge that there's a lot of money to be made in the business, even with rent controls. Landlords are already making enough money. They aren't going to build affordable housing because they can make more money building more expensive housing, so why do you want to raise tenants' rents? Why do you want to destroy rent control if it's not going to add any new affordable tenant housing?

**Hon Mr Leach:** I'll address the leader of the third party's comments, his lead-in comments about the letter from Mr Schwartz. I got a three-page letter from Mr Schwartz, apologizing for the way he had been misquoted and misunderstood in that article. He said in his letter to me that rent controls are a factor, but they are only one factor.

Again, what we put together to put before the people of Ontario is a package that's fair and reasonable, and the members of the opposition will have every opportunity this summer to have input into the process and help us perfect a very good proposal that we have before the people right now.

**Mr Hampton:** This is the real Common Sense Revolution. The minister stands up, and despite the fact that this appears on the business page of a Toronto newspaper, says it's really not true. It's a fact, Minister, sales last year of apartment buildings were up 60%. That's a historical fact. You can try to rewrite reality as much as you want. It is a fact, and it is a fact that people are buying into this market because they can make money.



I want to ask the minister a further question. The system is all about increasing rents. It's all about taking money from tenants, taking money from working families, taking money from seniors on fixed incomes and giving it to people who already have wealth and power. They already have money.

Minister, why don't you just come right out and say it? Why don't you admit to people this is not going to result in more apartment buildings being built? The people in the market are already telling you that. It's not going to do anything about that. This is about your government's agenda. It's about taking money from working families, taking money from seniors on fixed incomes and giving it to people who already have a lot of money. Just be honest and come right out and say it.

**Hon Mr Leach:** Again to the member opposite, let me just let the members know what is being said about our proposal. The Toronto Sun, June 26: "...these proposals seem like a reasonable compromise." The Ottawa Citizen: "The Harris government has taken a cautious and balanced approach." The Toronto Star: "The Tory government deserves credit...for...putting this proposal forward." I think that answers it all.

### PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. Today we had a press conference here held by a number of senior citizens' organizations, and they raised a case. They came here and they said at their press conference that they are very concerned about the user fees which have been put into the health care system and which will affect senior citizens. They say they now see they're going to be paying more for rent, they're going to be paying more for medication, they're going to be paying more for transportation. They say that on the drug benefit issue alone, they're going to be paying in many cases up to \$40 a month more to get prescription drug medication.

I want to ask the minister, where do you expect these senior citizens living on fixed incomes to cut? Do you expect them to cut on their food? Or maybe you expect them to cut on their rent, which is going to go up. Or do you expect them to cut on transportation, which is going to go up? Or do you expect them to cut on their medicine? Where do you expect them to cut?

**Hon Marilyn Mushinski (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation):** Given that the Minister of Health is responsible for seniors' issues and he is not here today, I am going to hand that over to the Deputy Premier.

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader):** The honourable member for Rainy River points out —

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** The member for Cochrane North will come to order.

**Hon Mr Eves:** The leader of the third party points out that the Minister of Health will be introducing a copayment fee effective July 15 of this year, and that's correct. What he doesn't point out in his question, however, is that in the same announcement the Minister of Health made, he will now be extending health care to 140,000

working, taxpaying, law-abiding Ontario citizens who didn't receive health care under your Trillium drug plan, who now, thanks to this Minister of Health, will be receiving it.

**Mr Hampton:** I asked where this senior citizen was supposed to cut now that she's going to be paying \$40 more per month in user fees, whether she should cut back on food, whether she should cut back on rent — I doubt she'll be able to cut back on rent; that's going to go up, the same as transit fees are going to go up. I got no answer, so let me try again.

Seniors say that your government won't meet with them, that you won't talk about seniors' issues. One of the seniors who was there was Shirley Waters, a senior citizen and cancer patient in remission. She said that your election campaign promise not to touch health care and not to implement user fees was a misrepresentation. That's what she said, that it was a misrepresentation by your government. She believes you are, and I quote her, "dividing the health care system into those who have and those who have not."

The seniors today said: "With the new user fees on drugs and the whittling away of many programs for all Ontarians, we are becoming a province that will be divided. We call on the Harris government to rethink their position of charging user fees on prescription drugs."

Why is your government insisting on dividing this province into a society of haves, who receive wealth and receive benefits, and a society of have-nots, who are receiving less and less all the time? Why are you doing that?

**Hon Mr Eves:** To the honourable member, we're not doing that. In fact, we're trying to do exactly the opposite. Believe me, it's a challenge, having followed the government he was a minister of, with the problems they left us.

The member is not correct. As a matter of fact, the Minister of Health indicated in the Legislature just yesterday, in response to a question from the member for Oriole, that he met last week with the Canadian Association of Retired Persons and he also met with the seniors' consumer association's Jane Leitch. He also pointed out in a response to a question yesterday in question period that neither of these groups even mentioned the copayment fee that he raises again today in question period.

**Mr Hampton:** I watched the Bill 26 hearings and I saw seniors' representatives appear and oppose the copayment fees and oppose the prescription drug fees. I guess maybe the Deputy Premier again wants to refute fact.

Deputy Premier, your hikes to public transit fees will affect senior citizens. Your destruction of rent controls will affect senior citizens; their rents will go up, but their incomes are not going up. Property taxes will go up because you have made cuts to municipalities, and these again will affect seniors who are on fixed incomes. Your cuts to social services will leave seniors vulnerable as well. Your hospital cutbacks are also affecting seniors.

We saw earlier how you intend to cut the wages of working people here and send out a symbolic message to employers across the province that it's okay, that the way



to go is to cut workers' wages. Is this also your message to senior citizens, that they should get used to living on less, that they should do without, that they should do without food, that they should do without the other necessities because your government is going to continue to cut them? Is that the message you're trying to send them?

**Hon Mr Eves:** The member for Rainy River knows full well that is not the message we're trying to send. As a matter of fact, he probably also knows that due to actions taken by this government, 80,000 more seniors will be receiving home care in Ontario than were receiving home care under his government. I'm surprised he didn't point that out. He also knows that every other single province in Canada has some sort of copayment fee. Ontario is the last province to do that.

If he wants to talk about increases to municipal taxation, from 1990 to 1993, when his government was in power, 259 municipalities in the province had public education mill rate increases; 138 of those had mill rate increases of greater than 15%. I'm quite prepared to stack up our record against the record of your government any time.

1510

#### INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** My question is to the government House leader and Minister of Finance. Last Thursday morning this assembly dealt with a private member's bill introduced by my colleague the Liberal member for Prescott and Russell, Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde. Mr Lalonde's bill concerns the very troubling issue of Quebec construction workers and Quebec construction businesses operating unfairly in the eastern and northeastern Ontario market. There was a good debate about Mr Lalonde's bill. It was unanimously agreed to. It was then referred to committee of the whole, which those of us who have been around here know is a Never-Never Land in terms of private member's legislation.

My question to the government House leader: Recognizing the fact that thousands of Ontario construction workers in places like Ottawa and Pembroke and Hawkesbury and Cornwall and Mattawa and North Bay and New Liskeard and Timmins are out of work, what is the intention of the Harris government with respect to bringing forward and moving expeditiously upon the contents of the Lalonde bill, Bill 60?

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader):** The government is indeed dialoguing with the province of Quebec on this very issue. It's my understanding, having talked to the Premier upon his return from the first ministers' meeting last week, that those discussions are ongoing between the province of Ontario and the province of Quebec.

I fully appreciate what he says about private member's bills, and I know it has been generally the tradition or practice in this place that most private member's bills (a) do not succeed — I think we all know that — and (b) when they're sent off to committee of the whole, he indicates it's a Never-Never Land. I would say to him, as

I said to his House leader in the last House leaders' meeting, we are not saying that we will not proceed with that bill. But we would like to try to achieve the result that he wants to achieve by negotiation with the province of Quebec as opposed to legislation. I can say to him quite directly that if the negotiation route is not successful, then we're prepared to look at other alternatives.

**Mr Conway:** I appreciate the minister's response, and I understand that there is a dialogue between Premier Harris and Premier Bouchard. I'm well aware of work being done by the Minister of Labour, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and the minister of interprovincial trade, but the reality is that it is June 26. This is peak construction season along the Ottawa River frontier.

The numbers provided recently by the Ottawa-Carleton construction association report for the spring, April-May 1996, show current unemployment rates in the construction trades of anywhere between 30% and 70%. You, sir, represent the town of Mattawa. I represent the city of Pembroke and areas in the upper Ottawa Valley. My colleague Mr Lalonde represents Hawkesbury and Rockland; Mr Cleary, Cornwall; Mr Morin, Gloucester. We have to go home and explain to unemployed construction workers by the hundreds, by the thousands, that we are doing something and we're going to do something expeditiously to deal with this uneven, discriminatory Quebec construction practice.

You've got to go to Mattawa. What are you going to say to the unemployed construction workers of eastern and northeastern Ontario this summer that is going to be beyond dialogue and is going to give them some real hope that they are going to get into the marketplace, compete fairly with their Quebec colleagues and end this wretched discrimination that dialogue over the years has not been able to end?

**Hon Mr Eves:** The honourable member is quite right. I, along with other members, including those of his party, am going to have to go home this summer, as he puts it, and talk to our constituents in that area of the province. We have several of my colleagues on this side of this House who are in that situation as well.

I can tell you that, yes, we do want to see a level playing field, but I think the best way to achieve it, quite frankly, is to try and get agreement out of the province of Quebec, as opposed to threatening the province of Quebec. As I said, the Premier has raised this issue with the first minister in the province of Quebec. He has asked the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs to deal with this issue. If that does not work, we are quite prepared to take further action on the issue.

#### NON-PROFIT HOUSING

**Mr David S. Cooke (Windsor-Riverside):** I have a question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. I have heard you speak in the last several months about the need to inject dollars into the private sector housing market in order to improve maintenance. My question is about what you're doing to the maintenance dollars in the co-op and non-profit housing sector.

I would like to ask you specifically how you can justify the massive cut in dollars for the rent-geared-to-income subsidies and the mortgage subsidy dollars and



not understand that that will have a dramatic negative impact on maintenance in our housing stock that we have all invested in as taxpayers; namely, the non-profit and co-op housing sector.

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** Yes, we are looking at the co-op housing operating costs. We all know the co-op housing project was probably one of the biggest boondoggles ever undertaken in this province, and the costs of operating those facilities are all over the place. The operating costs of some projects are as much as 50% more than others.

What we have done is we've gone to all of the co-op units. We've asked them all to review their operating costs. We've asked them to explain why on like projects some costs are 30% or 40% more than the costs on other projects. The ones that are operating efficiently will have no reductions. Those that can't justify their exorbitant maintenance costs will be asked to reduce them to a reasonable amount.

**Mr Cooke:** The minister can talk in his generalities; I have a specific I'd like to ask him about. It's dealing with the Belle River co-op in Belle River near my riding. This one you have cut, and you seemed to indicate in your last answer that you were cutting only those that had exorbitant costs, unjustified costs. In this particular case they are left with an operating budget of \$79,255. Out of that, their utilities are \$12,974 — they can't control that cost — and property taxes of \$41,500, for a total of \$54,474. That leaves them \$24,000 for waste removal, insurance, supplies and maintenance.

I'd like to ask the minister: You have given the death sentence to this particular co-op. It will deteriorate and it will not be able to be maintained. How can you justify that when you said you were interested in maintaining our housing stock?

**Hon Mr Leach:** I'll repeat: We're reviewing each and every project —

**Mr Cooke:** You've already cut them.

**Hon Mr Leach:** If the staff in the region are working with the people in the co-op, I'm sure they can address what is the adequate amount of maintenance money that's necessary, but we're looking at them all. We know that some operate very efficiently; some do not. We want to put them all on an even playing field.

I do not know the specifics of this particular one. I'll look into it, but I can tell you that what we're doing is trying to ensure they all operate as efficiently as possible.

1520

#### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** If I could just have a couple of seconds of the House's time, I'd like to inform the members that we have in the Legislative Assembly today, in the Speaker's gallery, a delegation from Turks and Caicos Islands. Please join me in welcoming our guests.

#### SHORTLINE RAILWAYS

**Mr Gary Fox (Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings):** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Last December this House passed Bill 5, the Short-

line Railways Act, whose purpose was to make it easier for small operators to buy abandoned rail lines and run them as short lines. I understand that this act has yet to come into force because of some coordination with the federal government that must take place first.

Would the minister advise the House when this act will come into force so that the small rail operators who are looking at investing here can do so?

**Interjection:** Good question.

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** I would like to thank the member for Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings for the question. And yes, it is a very good question.

I am pleased to be able to inform the member and the House that this legislation will be coming through very shortly. I believe July 1 is the anticipated date. We are waiting for the federal government to proclaim its own Bill C-101, the Canada Transportation Act. This will assist the national railways in rationalizing their operations, particularly by selling property and rail lines they no longer require. Some of these lines could be profitable as short lines, which is why this government took the initiative to introduce the Shortline Railways Act.

Our legislation and changes to Ontario's labour laws will help small operators set up short lines, and I would like to assure the House that we are not setting up a large bureaucracy. The Ontario government is not hiring additional staff, but will use the expertise within the Ministry of Transportation to administer the act. We will also be using federal ministries to do safety inspections, and the cost of these inspections will be paid by the operators, not the government.

**Mr Fox:** Given the minister's commitment to transportation safety, can he tell the House how the government will ensure that such railways operate safely?

**Hon Mr Palladini:** I would like to reiterate that insurance has been a problem, and I believe we have addressed that concern. There is a minimum of \$10 million in liability insurance to protect the public and the government, and the government will have the power to suspend or revoke a company's licence if it is not operating within a safe manner. There are also fines in the legislation. Violations of the act, regulations or licence will result in a fine up to \$5,000 for individuals, up to \$100,000 for corporations.

Rationalization of the national rail network is a fact of life, and I'm glad the federal government has recognized and dealt with it. I am pleased that the government of Ontario will make it possible for some of those jobs and local economic activity to continue to grow in the smaller communities of Ontario.

#### IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** My question is to the Solicitor General. It has to do with an issue that the New York Times today called, in a large headline, "Ontario Indian's Death is an Issue that Won't Die," and it has to do with the unfortunate incident at Ipperwash on September 6. It's now almost 10 months since the SIU, the special investigations unit, began its



investigation. We are anxiously awaiting the results of that study, which we hope will answer questions and will allow us to ask some additional questions.

The question, though, that I think is paramount to us is, did the OPP conduct this operation without seeking advice from the government and without even informing the government of how it planned to do it? That will be the paramount question we will ask.

As the minister knows, there was a substantial buildup of OPP resources going on and the Premier said on May 29: "We knew nothing of any buildup. My staff heard nothing of any buildup. I was informed of no buildup." The question to you, Minister, is this: Were you, as Solicitor General, prior to this incident on September 6, informed of any buildup? Did your staff know of any buildup by the OPP at Ipperwash?

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** I have responded to this in the past and in terms of specific numbers we weren't advised. We do not get involved in the operational decisions of the OPP. But certainly we knew there was concern with respect to the potential for the Ipperwash situation to perhaps grow in terms of the possibility of additional problems, and I think that was based on some of the intelligence that the OPP had received with respect to people coming into the area. It was also based on the broader issue of some of the situations that were occurring at that time, specifically in British Columbia. So I think there were valid concerns, but in terms of the member's query about specifics with respect to the operational efforts of the OPP, we were not advised.

**Mr Phillips:** I look forward to a more detailed and more public inquiry where we can perhaps hear witnesses to perhaps elaborate on this. You said that you were briefed on a daily basis by the OPP. Your words were, "I was told on a daily basis that the OPP continued to monitor the Ipperwash situation." I take that to mean that the OPP daily reviewed the situation at Ipperwash with you, told you what they were doing at Ipperwash, I assume. You were their minister. You, I gather, regarded this as a very serious situation.

Can you explain to the people of Ontario, with these briefings taking place, the OPP knowing that you are the civilian authority responsible for their operations, the OPP knowing at the time they were dealing with this situation in a completely different manner than they had dealt with previous situations dealing with our native community, they knowing that they would be held ultimately accountable for the actions, why the OPP did not inform you of the size of the buildup and of the possible action they may take only mere hours after they were briefing you? Can you explain that?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** Those briefings were essentially dealing with the situation on the ground with respect to the activities of the occupiers of the park, with respect to the activities that we might take in terms of an injunction. Certainly we knew there were, in terms of resources that the OPP was putting in place, adequate resources with which in their view they would be able to cope with the situation. There's no point, I would think, in terms of the OPP advising me on specifics in terms of numbers or the

kinds of people they may have surrounding the perimeter. These are the experts, they're the professionals in the field, and I rely on them, as have previous ministers of the crown, to conduct these operations in a most effective and efficient way.

I cannot and will not, and I would hope the member would encourage me not to, involve myself in any way, shape or form with operational decisions of the police in this province.

1530

## YOUNG OFFENDERS

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** My question is also to the Solicitor General and the minister responsible for corrections. I'm not surprised you gave that response because day after day here in this House you try to distance yourself and your office from any kind of responsibility to do with anything that happens under the auspices of your ministry.

I'd like to refer again to the alleged beatings of young offenders that apparently took place at Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre. Yesterday, I raised with you in this House additional allegations with respect to at least three young people who were allegedly beaten on or around March 15. The child advocate today has confirmed that these additional incidents occurred, incidents after the first incidents, after the investigations which you are so proud of had already begun.

Minister, you responded on June 10 that your office had logged only one recorded call concerning the treatment of young offenders following the Bluewater incident and that that parent was satisfied with the response. Today we find through the media report that a mother called the minister's office seven times between March 4 and March 27 and spoke to your staff, your personal staff, for a total of more than 30 minutes.

Presumably these are the same political staff who received the calls and who would have received that briefing note from March 7 which we brought to your attention earlier this week. They didn't take the calls or the briefing notes seriously enough to even alert you, as minister, to personally intervene in the situation to find out what was going on to young people under your care.

Yesterday I asked you who was investigating your lack of knowledge and initiative into the whole affair, and today I'm asking you very directly, because these people work directly for you and no one else, what actions you have taken to investigate and deal with the inaction of your staff around these incidents. Who's investigating when your executive assistant, Kathryn Hunt, and Justin Brown, your legislative assistant, knew about these issues and did not tell you?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** My staff did not know of these allegations and I stand by the answers I've delivered on this issue earlier.

**Mrs Boyd:** It's passing strange that a mother could have spoken to the staff in the minister's office for more than 30 minutes and has the telephone bills to show that that was so, and she never spoke to his staff? This becomes more bizarre every day.



I find it really disturbing that the press and the critics in this House know more about what's going on in your ministry than you do. Every day we come in here and tell you more about what's happening in your own ministry concerning alleged abuse of young people, and all you do is request further investigations.

Even as late as yesterday you got all confused and you tried to tell us there were only two investigations: a police investigation and the internal investigation. We all know that's not so, because we've heard you say: "The OPP are investigating. The child advocate investigated. There is an internal investigation. The London police are investigating." Then you announce to the world you're calling in an independent third party to investigate your whole ministry.

Today we found out that the College of Physicians and Surgeons has received a complaint concerning the treatment — or should I say lack of treatment — of the young people in your care at Elgin-Middlesex. Minister, you don't know what's going on in your ministry. All the investigations you've called have probably already been compromised by your inaction.

If you can't tell us who's investigating you and your office — you don't have the decency to resign until the investigations are concluded — will you at the very least commit today to refer this whole affair to a parliamentary committee?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** With respect to the concerns of the mother in question, she's been encouraged to share those with Inspector Christopherson, the head of the internal investigation. I think this matter's being dealt with appropriately.

### LIQUOR LICENSING

**Mr Jim Brown (Scarborough West):** My question is to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. During second reading debate on Bill 75, the Alcohol, Gaming and Charity Funding Public Interest Act, you announced an amendment to the Liquor Licence Act that would limit applications for liquor sales licences for up to two years at problem premises that had ongoing infractions and illegal activities occurring.

Since that announcement, I have been contacted by a number of constituents with respect to the process that would be undertaken if such a strong measure was required. Will landlords have a fair opportunity to represent their interests before a revocation of a licence would take place?

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations):** It is strong measures and it is supported by many of the members of this caucus and by the community at large because of these very, very difficult premises where a number of illegal activities were taking place.

However, there is a due process which is necessary under our laws here in Ontario and in Canada which will take place. The landlord will be notified that the premises may in fact have this privilege withdrawn and that there will be an opportunity for a hearing. Second, the amendments also stipulate that such a process will only be

undertaken if it is, in the opinion of the board, necessary to revoke this because of the public interest. The public will of course be involved in the hearing and will be called to prove their case.

However, I look forward to this as not only a sanction but a sanction which will bring into line a lot of people who are now flouting the laws of Ontario.

**Mr Jim Brown:** Minister, shortly after your statement there were some media reports that this amendment meant that instead of going after the shady characters who are causing the problems, the landlords would be the sole targets. Needless to say, a number of commercial landlords are concerned. Why would landlords be targeted instead of those people directly causing the problems?

**Hon Mr Sterling:** I really appreciate this opportunity to clarify this issue. First of all, the licensee, the person running that restaurant or bar where this illegal activity was taking place, would lose their licence. The part about salting the earth of the premises — in other words, putting this sanction against the premises — would only come after the revocation of the licence with regard to the operator. It would only be taking place in a situation where there was a continuing problem with the premises.

There also is no doubt that the police have in the past charged with criminal offences, and will continue to do so, those people undertaking such activities as dealing in drugs or prostitution or any other criminal behaviour occurring in these premises.

Therefore, the primary person who is responsible for the running of that particular premises will be dealt with first, but the landlord, under this new law, will also have to take some joint responsibility for ensuring that the premises are used for their proper purposes.

### DELLCREST CHILDREN'S CENTRE

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale):** I have a question to the Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services. At 11:05 this morning you sent me this fax which says that after sympathetic consideration, you decided to open the Dellcrest custody facility for young offenders, who, by the way, have criminal records ranging from break and enter to serious violence, including sexual offences.

Even halfwitted bureaucrats know we're trying to rebuild what's left of our community, described as a hospital without walls. A Toronto Star reporter writes: "This district contains the highest concentration of former mental patients in the country. It is the enlightened state's dumping ground for crazy people, many of them doped to the eyes or in chemical straitjackets paid for by the enlightened state."

In addition to this, we have a number of drinking establishments charged with various liquor infractions and harbouring prostitutes and drug dealers. Will locating such an open-custody residence near these criminal activities not be counterproductive to what you are trying to achieve, namely, the rehabilitation of young offenders?

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services):** I appreciate the concerns of the member and his constituents with respect



to this decision. I think Dellcrest found itself in a difficult position with respect to finding a new location. They had to go where properties were appropriately zoned and they required certain space as well, and this facility was appropriately zoned; it was about a mile and a half from the current location.

I understand the member's concerns with respect to the concentration of these kinds of facilities in that area, but for me to intervene in what is essentially a local zoning matter I felt wasn't appropriate and would set a precedent that would perhaps be best described as unfortunate with respect to these kinds of decisions being taken across the province. If you make that kind of decision to intervene in one situation, it opens a door which I don't think I would wish to open.

1540

**Mr Ruprecht:** I'll get to the question of the zoning matter in a second, but let me remind the minister that not too long ago your ministry relocated a probation and parole centre which brings to the heart of Parkdale 1,400 ex-offenders. This probation office is less than 350 metres from the Dellcrest site and less than 100 metres from where persons routinely get arrested in prostitution sweeps. Before these ex-offenders arrive at the probation office, they will have to walk the gauntlet and meet drug pushers, pimps and prostitutes.

You surely must be aware that within a few short blocks there are 26 other care facilities: group homes, methadone clinics, crisis care facilities, including a mental health care centre that is sucking in anyone with a mental health problem from as far away as Brampton, Mississauga and Halton. To place this custody centre in the midst of this neighbourhood is in itself an insane act of incompetence, especially in the light of the fact that you have, with your full knowledge, all of Metro Toronto to choose from.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** What's your question?

**Mr Ruprecht:** My question is the following: The city of Toronto now has decided that by July 2 it will re-examine the whole question of zoning for the Dellcrest Centre. Will this minister give us the assurance that he will not fund this centre and will prevent it from opening until the city of Toronto has made that zoning decision on July 2?

**Hon Mr Runciman:** I've indicated to the member and I have made a number of efforts based on his request to expedite meetings with my officials and officials of Dellcrest to address the concerns of residents. We've made every effort, but I come back to the fact that we are essentially dealing with a municipal zoning and density question which should be referred to the city of Toronto and its planning and development department. I think it would be quite inappropriate for me to intervene. I would encourage the member to work with the board of Dellcrest to see if some kind of accommodation can be made with respect to the decision that may be forthcoming.

#### WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** My question is to the Minister of Labour. Minister, even

though you've got a junior minister responsible for WCB reform, you have to accept ultimate responsibility for making the mess your government has of workers' compensation.

There has not been a meeting of the board of directors since last October, which is in direct violation of the Workers' Compensation Act — Minister, where are you going?

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Please put the question.

**Mr Christopherson:** Well, it was for the minister who packed up her things and started to head out the door. You've been hanging around Cam too long, Minister.

**The Speaker:** Put your question.

**Mr Christopherson:** I will put the question again to the minister.

**The Speaker:** Please withdraw the unparliamentary remark, referring to another member as you did. Would you withdraw?

**Mr Christopherson:** Speaker, if I said anything unparliamentary, I do indeed withdraw it.

Minister, I stated earlier that even though you have a junior minister responsible for reform of the WCB, you have to accept ultimate responsibility for the mess that now exists in workers' compensation. I said there has not been a meeting of the board of directors since last October, which is in direct violation of the Workers' Compensation Act, which requires a meeting every two months. It also means that because there no longer is a bipartite board, any decision that's been made since October has had no worker representation at all — no input. Because you have passed Bill 15, workers, as we stand today, have no say in what's going on in the Workers' Compensation Board.

Do you ever intend to reappoint a board, and, assuming you do, will you ensure that the workers in Ontario will continue to receive a 50% equal representation in decisions made at the board?

**The Speaker:** The question has been asked.

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Labour):** I'm very pleased that you asked the question, because I can indicate to you that we are actually at a point where we will soon be announcing the names of the new board members. I anticipate that will happen over the course of the summer. However, you also know that in appointing a new board, it will be a multistakeholder board. We will have a board of individuals who will be totally committed to ensuring that the board operates effectively on behalf of all employees, all injured workers and the employers.

**Mr Christopherson:** Minister, you know very well that having done away with the bipartite nature of the board, there will be no fair representation for workers there. You're going to load it up with your employer friends and make sure they carry out the anti-worker policies of this government. That's your agenda with regard to the board and everybody knows it. You have brought forward a discussion paper under the heading of Cam Jackson, having already scrapped the distinguished royal commission, and a year later we still don't know exactly what you're going to do.

The facts in Minister Jackson's report have been discredited and we've raised those issues here in the



House. His proposal to give employers control of the first four to six weeks has been ridiculed across the province. He still has to deal with your promise to cut assessment rates by 5%, which will increase the unfunded liability in our calculation by \$6 billion after seeing the unfunded liability drop two years in a row as a result of the NDP reforms, and he's on record as saying he's opposed to further cutting of indexation, so you can't save money there.

Minister, the whole reform matter is out of control. He can't get a policy through cabinet. We hear the rumours. It keeps getting rejected. When are you going to fire that minister, reinstate a bipartite board of directors and look at the issue that really matters in terms of reform, the rights and needs of injured workers? When are you going to do that?

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** First of all, I would just like to indicate to you that the minister with responsibility for workers' compensation reform has done an outstanding job in consulting with people throughout the province. He has consulted widely with all the stakeholders, and I know he is at a point where he has a report ready. I would indicate to you that report will be released very soon and you will have an opportunity to react further to the report that is presented.

I would also indicate to you that we have a new president at the helm and we are working actively to make sure that the case management for injured workers is dealt with in a much more expeditious manner. We are looking after the interests of the injured workers in a much more timely and effective manner. You had five years to deal with the problem and you did absolutely zilch.

**The Speaker:** The time for oral questions has expired. We will deal now with the two deferred votes. We'll be dealing with second reading of Bill 75 and third reading of Bill 59. Call in the members. There will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1549 to 1554.*

#### ALCOHOL, GAMING AND CHARITY FUNDING PUBLIC INTEREST ACT, 1996

#### LOI DE 1996 RÉGISSANT LES ALCOOLS, LES JEUX ET LE FINANCEMENT

#### DES ORGANISMES DE BIENFAISANCE DANS L'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 75, An Act to regulate alcohol and gaming in the public interest, to fund charities through the responsible management of video lotteries and to amend certain statutes related to liquor and gaming / Projet de loi 75, Loi réglementant les alcools et les jeux dans l'intérêt public, prévoyant le financement des organismes de bienfaisance grâce à la gestion responsable des loteries vidéo et modifiant des lois en ce qui a trait aux alcools et aux jeux.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** We're dealing with second reading of Bill 75 standing in the name of Mr Sterling. Those in favour will rise one at a time.

#### Ayes

Baird, John R.	Harnick, Charles	Preston, Peter
Barrett, Toby	Hastings, John	Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Bassett, Isabel	Hudak, Tim	Runciman, Robert W.
Beaubien, Marcel	Jackson, Cameron	Sampson, Rob
Brown, Jim	Johnson, Bert	Saunderson, William
Chudleigh, Ted	Johnson, David	Skarica, Toni
Clement, Tony	Johnson, Ron	Smith, Bruce
Cunningham, Dianne	Jordan, W. Leo	Snobelen, John
Danford, Harry	Kells, Morley	Sterling, Norman W.
DeFaria, Carl	Klees, Frank	Stewart, R. Gary
Doyle, Ed	Leach, Al	Stockwell, Chris
Elliott, Brenda	Marland, Margaret	Tascona, Joseph N.
Eves, Ernie L.	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tilson, David
Fisher, Barbara	Munro, Julia	Tsubouchi, David H.
Ford, Douglas B.	Murdoch, Bill	Turnbull, David
Fox, Gary	Mushinski, Marilyn	Vankoughnet, Bill
Galt, Doug	Newman, Dan	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Gilchrist, Steve	North, Peter	Wood, Bob
Grimmett, Bill	Palladini, Al	Young, Terence H.
Guzzo, Garry J.	Parker, John L.	
Hardeman, Ernie	Pettit, Trevor	

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one at a time.

#### Nays

Bartolucci, Rick	Crozier, Bruce	Morin, Gilles E.
Boyd, Marion	Curling, Alvin	Phillips, Gerry
Bradley, James J.	Grandmaître, Bernard	Pouliot, Gilles
Caplan, Elinor	Hoy, Pat	Pupatello, Sandra
Castrilli, Annamarie	Kennedy, Gerard	Ramsay, David
Christopherson, David	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Churley, Marilyn	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Silipo, Tony
Cleary, John C.	Laughren, Floyd	Wildman, Bud
Colle, Mike	Marchese, Rosario	Wood, Len
Conway, Sean G.	Martel, Shelley	
Cooke, David S.	McGuinty, Dalton	

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 61; the nays are 31.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations):** The justice committee.

**The Speaker:** The justice committee.

#### AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE RATE STABILITY ACT, 1996

#### LOI DE 1996 SUR LA STABILITÉ DES TAUX D'ASSURANCE-AUTOMOBILE

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 59, An Act to provide Ontario drivers with fair, balanced and stable automobile insurance and to make other amendments related to insurance matters / Projet de loi 59, Loi visant à offrir une assurance-automobile équitable, équilibrée et stable aux conducteurs ontariens et à apporter d'autres modifications portant sur des questions d'assurance.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** We'll now deal with third reading of Bill 59, standing in the name of Mr Eves. Same vote? Agreed.



**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 61; the nays are 31.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

## MOTIONS

### HOUSE SITTINGS

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader):** Notwithstanding standing order 96(a), I move that the House will not consider private members' public business on Thursday, June 27, 1996, but that the House shall meet from 10 am to 12 noon on that day for consideration of government orders; and at 1:30 pm the House shall proceed to routine proceedings followed by orders of the day.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

### CONSIDERATION OF BILL 36

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader):** I move that the order of the House of June 19, 1996, referring Bill 36, An Act to amend certain acts administered by the Ministry of Natural Resources, to the committee of the whole House be discharged and the bill be ordered for third reading.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Is that carried? Carried.

1600

## PETITIONS

### NURSING STAFF

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole):** I have a petition with 59 signatures. Some of the signatories are here in the galleries today.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the mission statement of the Toronto Hospital says, 'The Toronto Hospital will provide exemplary patient care';

"Whereas we, the registered nurses who work in the operating suite at the general division of the Toronto Hospital, located at 200 Elizabeth Street, Toronto, are gravely concerned about the erosion of patient care in the operating room;

"Whereas in order to cut costs, the CEO and director of surgical program and services have hired 16 registered practical nurses with the intention of replacing 16 registered nurses in the operating room by fall 1996;

"Whereas in the past, the policy had been that in order to apply to work in the operating room one must have a certificate in operating room nursing from a recognized course, none of the 16 meet this criterion, four of these registered practical nurses come with some operating room experience and the rest come with life skills, according to the director of surgical program and ser-

vices. They will be trained with a hastily put together in-house operating room course which consists of one month of classroom and two months of practical training in the operating room. Furthermore, the instructor involved has never taught an operating room course curriculum before;

"Whereas after meeting with the director of surgical program and services, we came away with the unmistakable impression that this restructuring initiative is not based on a model that has proven effective elsewhere — in fact, she and the rest of the administrative staff are flying by the seat of their pants;

"Whereas the Toronto Hospital operating room deals with patients who have multiple and complex health problems all the time, apart from major cardiac, thoracic, vascular, abdominal and ENT surgery on a daily basis, it also provides a 24-hour emergency service for transplant cases and to patients who arrive in emergency requiring timely lifesaving operations;

"Whereas the recent passage of Bill 26 gives the Minister of Health the power to order hospitals to maintain their high quality in patient care;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"We urge the Minister of Health to ensure that the Toronto Hospital lives up to its mission statement promise for the best interests of the public.

"We urge the Minister of Health to look into the issue and to ensure a high standard of patient care at the Toronto General operating room is preserved by disallowing the replacement of registered nurses with registered practical nurses."

I affix my signature to this important petition.

### FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** My petition is equally important, but much shorter, you'll be happy to know.

I have in front of me hundreds of petitions from citizens all over Ontario urging the Legislative Assembly to stop the plans of the Attorney General to gut the family support plan, pointing out that the family support plan supports the most vulnerable people in our society and opposing in particular the closure of the eight regional offices which give local contact to people who are in receipt of family support and who are payors of family support.

I'm proud to support this petition.

### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly brought to me today by some of my constituents who are sitting up in the balcony. I want to recognize that. They also brought me 100 letters, which I delivered to the Minister of Education today.

"Whereas we are a group of concerned community members in Grey county where funding cuts to our board of education budget are forcing our children to walk up to 1.6 kilometres in rural areas and up to 4.8 kilometres in urban areas, this presents the real possibility of placing our children in dangerous situations such as gravel



thrown from vehicle tires; speeding vehicles; snowplows operating; large snowbanks; no sidewalks and often no road shoulders; poor visibility due to hills and curves; poor weather conditions that include whiteouts, fog, darkness in winter, sudden storms, severe wind chill; no shelters; predictable walking times and isolation from some children offer opportunities to human predators, dogs, bears and rabid animals in an area that is rated one of the highest in the world for incidence of rabies;

"We, the undersigned, do hereby petition the Legislative Assembly and the Minister of Education to review the situation and ensure that adequate funding is provided so that the safety and wellbeing of our children are not compromised."

#### DELLCREST CHILDREN'S CENTRE

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale):** I keep getting petitions about the Dellcrest Children's Centre. This is signed by a number of residents and even people who are outside Parkdale. It reads:

"Whereas the Dellcrest Children's Centre is planning to open a 10-bed open custody residence; and

"Whereas the residence is an inappropriate site for the rehabilitation of troubled children because it is within walking distance to illicit drug and prostitution activities, a large number of unsupervised and supervised rooming houses that are home to ex-psychiatric patients, parolees and our society's most vulnerable and ostracized members, and a number of licensed establishments that have been charged with various liquor infractions; and

"Whereas the Ministry of Correctional Services has decided not to hold open discussions with our community prior to this purpose; and

"Whereas the decision to relocate also expresses a total lack of regard towards our community's consistent and well-documented wishes for the Ontario government to stop the creation or relocation of additional social service programs or offices in an area that is already oversaturated with health and social services for disadvantaged, troubled or disenfranchised people;

"Therefore we, the undersigned local residents and business owners, urge the Ministry of the Solicitor General to suspend plans to relocate this open custody residence until a full review of the Dellcrest Children's Centre's decision can be conducted, and explore with us other locations which are more appropriate."

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I have over 5,000 signatures to add to the thousands I've already presented from Canadian auto workers all across Ontario. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and Premier Harris.

"We, the undersigned, oppose any attempt to erode the structure, services or funding of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers;

"We therefore demand that education and training of Ontario workers continue in its present form through the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and that professional and technical expertise and advice continue to be pro-

vided through the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers."

As I continue to support these petitions, I will add my signature to theirs.

#### BEAR HUNTING

**Mr Frank Klees (York-Mackenzie):** I've been asked to submit this petition by a constituent, Louise Charlton, who's associated with Animal Alliance of Canada. It contains some 514 signatures, and I'd like to read the preamble.

"Whereas bears are hunted in the spring after they have come out of hibernation; and

"Whereas about 30% of the bears killed in the spring are female, some with cubs; and

"Whereas over 70% of the orphaned cubs do not survive the first year; and

"Whereas 95.3% of the bears killed by non-resident hunters and 54% killed by resident hunters are killed over bait; and

"Whereas Ontario still allows the limited use of dogs in bear hunting; and

"Whereas bears are the only large mammals hunted in the spring; and

"Whereas bears are the only mammals hunted over bait; and

"Whereas there are only six states in the United States which still allow a spring hunt;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to amend the Game and Fish Act to prohibit the hunting of bears in the spring and to prohibit the use of baiting and dogs in all bear hunting activities."

#### HIGHWAY NOISE BARRIER

**Mr Gilles E. Morin (Carleton East):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the widening of the Queensway has caused the noise of highway traffic to constitute an inescapable nuisance, disturbing the rest and peace of Carleton Condominium Corp No. 11 residents and greatly diminishing the real estate value of their homes; and

"Whereas by a letter dated July 11, 1995, the Ontario Ministry of Transportation regional environmental unit planning and design section informed the Regional Group of Companies Inc agents for Carleton Condominium Corp No. 11 that Carleton Condominium Corp No. 11 does qualify as a candidate site on the ministry's province-wide noise barrier retrofit list as of 1988;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To please give urgent priority for the construction of a noise barrier along the property of Carleton Condominium Corp No. 11, adjacent to the Ottawa Queensway in Gloucester."

I have signed this petition.

1610

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** I have a petition here from the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1000A from Rexdale, Local 329 from Ottawa,



Local 206 from Kitchener, Local 1977 from Cambridge, Locals 175 and 633 from Kitchener and Local 358 from Waterloo. The petition reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas it is vital that occupational health and safety services provided to workers be conducted by organizations in which workers have faith; and

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers have provided such services on behalf of workers for many years; and

"Whereas the centre and clinics have made a significant contribution to improvements in workplace health and safety and the reduction of injuries, illnesses and death caused by work,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode the structure, services or funding of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers.

"Further, we, the undersigned, demand that education and training of Ontario workers continue in its present form through the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and that professional and technical expertise and advice continue to be provided through the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers."

I attach my signature to this.

#### GASOLINE PRICES

**Mrs Julia Munro (Durham-York):** Mr George Withy of Brechin has asked me to present another petition pertaining to the exorbitant price of gasoline in Ontario. This petition is signed by Mr Withy and approximately 266 concerned citizens of Beaverton, Woodville, Port Bolster, Sunderland, Ajax, Orillia, Sutton, Keswick, Jacksons Point, Cannington and Pefferlaw, to name but a few of the communities. The petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned, do hereby protest the extremely high price for gasoline at the pumps and what looks like petroleum price fixing."

I agree with this petition, and I have affixed my name to it.

#### RENT REGULATION

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South):** It's an important petition from hundreds of people from Lucknow, Petrolia, Emo, Mitchell, St Catharines, Fort Frances, Penetang, Kitchener, Sault Ste Marie, Ottawa, Seaforth and Timmins. It's a petition to the Ontario Legislature, to Premier Michael Harris, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Al Leach and members of the Ontario provincial Legislature.

"We, the undersigned, protest this government's actions against tenants described below. The Rent Control Act protects Ontario's 3.3 million tenants. Rent control allows for security and stability in their homes and communities. Uncontrolled rent increases leave tenants, their families and Ontario communities open to eviction, personal distress, and contribute directly to social instabil-

ity. We want this government to stop any actions which would allow uncontrolled rents.

"Further, this government is considering changes to the Landlord and Tenant Act favourable to landlords for easier and faster evictions. This is unacceptable to Ontario tenants and damaging to Ontario communities. This government also plans to get rid of public housing, has halted the creation of basement apartments and a new supply of affordable non-profit housing. These types of housing are necessary for low- and moderate-income tenants to obtain accommodation they can afford. The government must cease all actions that reduce the affordability and availability of these kinds of housing.

"This government has eliminated funding for the United Tenants of Ontario, five municipal tenant organizations and other important tenant services at a time when they are attacking all tenants' rights. Funding for these groups must be reinstated so that Ontario's tenants, and not just their landlords, are able to bring their views to bear on government deliberations on tenants' rights and protection. A consultation process with tenants' organizations should be initiated immediately to develop a plan for sustainable funding for services to tenants."

I affix my name to this petition.

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** I have a petition here from Sault Ste Marie, the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union Local 545, who are really upset over what's happening to health and safety in the province. They say:

"Whereas it is vital that occupational health and safety services provided to workers be conducted by organizations in which workers have faith; and

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers have provided such services on behalf of workers for many years; and

"Whereas the centre and clinics have made a significant contribution to improvements in workplace health and safety and the reduction of injuries, illnesses and death caused by work,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode the structure, services or funding of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers.

"Further, we, the undersigned, demand that education and training of Ontario workers continue in its present form through the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and that professional and technical expertise and advice continue to be provided through the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers."

I have signed my signature.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** The time for petitions has now expired.

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I would just like to ask the House if it would consider giving unanimous consent to extend the petitioning time by five minutes today, as today and tomorrow are the last opportunities members of this



House have to present petitions until the opening of the fall session in late September.

**The Acting Speaker:** Agreed? Agreed.

#### NORTH YORK BRANSON HOSPITAL

**Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee has recommended that North York Branson Hospital merge with York-Finch Hospital; and

"Whereas this recommendation will remove emergency and inpatient services currently provided by North York Branson Hospital, which will seriously jeopardize medical care and the quality of health for the growing population which the hospital serves, many being elderly people who in numerous cases require treatment for life-threatening medical conditions,

"We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reject the recommendation contained within the final report of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council hospital restructuring committee as it pertains to North York Branson Hospital so that it retains, at minimum, emergency and inpatient services."

I've affixed my signature.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** In an attempt to be fair, I am now going to move to the member for Kitchener.

#### ABORTION

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener):** I realize that was a significant departure. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I have a petition here from my constituents in Kitchener to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas induced abortion is the intentional medical killing of a pre-born human being before birth, and evidence that pre-born human beings of 5-6 weeks' gestation have the ability to experience pain has been reported as long ago as 1941 and corroborated as recently as 1994; and

"Whereas a recent study reviewing all available research on the reasons for abortion in Canada concluded that, 'As the procedure (abortion) is not therapeutic and as there is mounting evidence that it is harmful to women's health, funding by the government under health care cannot be justified'; and

"Whereas US studies have shown that where public funding for abortion has been removed, both the pregnancy rate and the abortion rate have dropped significantly; and

"Whereas the Canada Health Act does not require that 'elective procedures' be funded, nor has any Canadian court ever found a constitutional right to publicly funded abortion; and

"Whereas it is the responsibility and the authority of the province exclusively to determine what services will be insured,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Ontario government remove induced abortion from its medically insured services; and

"That the Ontario government, through the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Community and Social Services, endeavour to encourage an alliance between all groups offering crisis pregnancy support across the province."

I affix my signature.

#### EXTENDICARE FACILITY

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** "Whereas reductions in funding afforded by Extendicare for health care aids has had a detrimental effect on the quality of care afforded residents of Extendicare in Haileybury; and

"Whereas the Extendicare facility in Haileybury has reduced the ability of front-line workers to maintain adequate personal care and consideration for its residents; and

"Whereas the goal of nursing home care should be to provide a safe, clean and healthy environment for those whose dignity we cherish,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Extendicare of Haileybury in Ontario to re-examine their cost-containment initiatives and to restore to adequate levels the front-line services residents of these facilities so richly deserve."

#### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North):** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it's from the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada, CEP, Local 27 in Don Mills, Local 975 in Scarborough, Local 526 in Brockville, Local 1144 in Toronto, Local 599-0 in Peterborough, Local 25 in Toronto and Local 800 in Sarnia:

"Whereas it is vital that occupational health and safety services provided to workers be conducted by organizations in which workers have faith; and

"Whereas the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers have provided such services on behalf of the workers for many years; and

"Whereas the centre and clinics have made a significant contribution to improvements in workplace health and safety and the reduction of injuries, illnesses and death caused by work,

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to oppose any attempt to erode the structure, services and funding of the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers.

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"Further, we, the undersigned, demand that education and training of Ontario workers continue in its present form through the Workers' Health and Safety Centre and that professional and technical expertise and advice continue to be provided to the occupational health clinics for Ontario workers."

I support this petition 100% and I affix my name to it.

#### SCARBOROUGH GENERAL HOSPITAL

**Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre):** I have a petition to the Legislature of Ontario. It reads:



"Whereas the recommendations of the Metropolitan Toronto District Health Council to close inpatient paediatric beds, the special care nursery and the burn unit at Scarborough General Hospital resulting in significantly reduced access to paediatric, newborn and burn care for a large geographic area of Scarborough; and

"Whereas the paediatric unit, special care nursery and burn unit at Scarborough General Hospital provide very cost-efficient, quality care;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario to:

"(1) Continue paediatric services including inpatient paediatric beds,

"(2) Continue special care nursery services,

"(3) Continue and combine Metropolitan Toronto's burn care

"At Scarborough General Hospital!"

I have affixed my signature to this worthwhile petition.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

Mr Ron Johnson from the standing committee on administration of justice presented the committee's report as follows and moved its adoption:

Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 54, An Act to provide for the delegation of the administration of certain designated statutes to designated administrative authorities and to provide for certain limitation periods in those statutes / *Projet de loi 54, Loi prévoyant la délégation de l'application de certaines lois désignées à des organismes d'application désignés et prévoyant certains délais de prescription dans ces lois.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

Shall Bill 54 be ordered for third reading? Agreed.

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Mr Martin from the standing committee on government agencies presented the committee's 14th report.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Pursuant to standing order 106(g)(11), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Mr Smith from the standing committee on regulations and private bills presented the following report and moved its adoption:

Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill Pr59, An Act respecting the City of Kingston.

Your committee begs to report the following bill with amendment:

Bill Pr62, An Act to revive Delzap Construction Ltd.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### NATIONAL BALLET OF CANADA ACT, 1996

Ms Bassett moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr64, An Act respecting the National Ballet of Canada.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Report continues in volume B.*



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## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)



Wednesday 26 June 1996

Mercredi 26 juin 1996

Speaker  
Honourable Allan K. McLean

Président  
L'honorable Allan K. McLean

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 26 June 1996

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 26 juin 1996

*Report continued from volume A.*

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## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1996

### LOI DE 1996 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LE MINISTÈRE DES RICHESSES NATURELLES

Mr Klees, on behalf of Mr Hodgson, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 36, An Act to amend certain acts administered by the Ministry of Natural Resources / *Projet de loi 36, Loi modifiant certaines lois appliquées par le ministère des Richesses naturelles.*

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** I am pleased to be able to rise on the third reading of this bill, because I attempted to speak twice on the second reading of this bill and the very diligent table officers shut me down very quickly. I am sure the folks back home are very anxious to hear again what I had to say in the second reading debate. They probably didn't know why all of a sudden I just sat in my chair, but I was told to sit down; that was about six weeks apart, I believe. I am glad to have this opportunity to speak on this bill on behalf of my party.

As I hope most of us in this House realize, and the people watching, this is basically a mini-omnibus bill brought forward by the Minister of Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines which is going to amend the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, the Game and Fish Act and the Provincial Parks Act. There are some very important matters here that actually are of very keen interest to the general public in regard to this bill — it's not just housekeeping — and there are some parts of this bill that I do support and other parts of it that I don't.

In fact, I believe it was an attempt by the government to diminish opposition to this bill by bringing it in in the form of an omnibus bill so that parts of the bill that I and my colleagues could support — for instance, a restriction on the sale of bear parts throughout this province, something that we and I'm sure all members in the House support — were mixed with the privatization of provincial parks and the hiking of provincial park fees. Unfortunately, it is all together in one lump, but these debates do afford an opportunity for members to get up and debate those issues that they do support and those that they don't and so the public can become clear as to what those issues are from our side of it.

The area of greatest concern that this act addresses and that, as I said before, I do support is the prohibition of the sale of illegal bear parts in Ontario. The legislation prohibits the sale of bears or bear parts, regardless of whether they have been killed in Ontario or not, and I think that's a very progressive change. This provision is designed to respond to a growing public campaign against the sale of these bear parts. We've all read in the newspapers about the incredible demand for parts such as gall bladders in different countries around the world. Ontario being the repository of a great part of North America's black bear population, this is where poachers come to harvest these bears illegally and then sell these parts in Ontario and around the world. It is a very lucrative business, and unfortunately where there's a buck to be made there are some people, as human nature unfortunately presents us, who take advantage of that opportunity.

I am very happy to see that the government is stepping in here in a very hard way to beef up its enforcement of the prohibition against the sale of bear parts in Ontario.

The argument that's made, of course, is that with this very lucrative market there is a great increase in illegal bear hunting. There are also many in the general public who have concerns about legal bear hunting in Ontario. As people may know, bear hunting is rather different from the regular sort of game hunting where you stalk the game through the bush and the forest. Bear hunting is on a different type of footing, where guides set baits both in spring and in the fall and basically the bear is baited to that baiting area.

Many in society don't like that type of hunting, and there is a great debate over whether we should be allowing spring hunting of bears at all. Even as a northerner, while bear hunting is a lucrative activity in my riding, I certainly have to question the open season on a mammal in the springtime when many of those female bears are in cub. That's something maybe we have to debate another time. But for now, what the government has put forward I certainly do support and I think it's proper to do so and we'll be looking forward to that greater enforcement.

1630

An area of concern I do have is what the government wants to do with its provincial parks. I personally and many of my northern colleagues have been affected by the closure of a lot of these parks, by the inability of the government to open some of these provincial parks and the attempt of the government to privatize some of the other parks that it feels are not economically sustainable.

I really have to question, as I did in my second reading debate about six weeks ago now, the whole notion that provincial parks should be considered profit centres. I



don't think that was the original idea of probably a Conservative government at the beginning of this century when we first established provincial parks. I believe it's the 100th anniversary of Algonquin park, so I guess it was before this century started, back in at least 1896, and maybe it was 1895, when the government of the day first established Algonquin park as the first provincial park in this province. So we've really got a proud tradition of 100-years-plus in this province of setting aside wild areas, wilderness areas, for the recreational use of the people of Ontario.

While there's a lot of controversy about how much parkland we need and extending parks today, there's certainly no debate as to the function of parks, the principle of why we set aside land for the parks. It's conservation, it's preservation, but also it's for the enjoyment of the people of Ontario, and it also adds an economic boost as it is a major attraction for tourism all year round now in this province. For the Minister of Natural Resources at the very beginning of the park season, about a month before parks normally start to open, to announce that they would start to have some discussions with some local groups in the communities adjacent to some of these parks that they did not feel were viable to open any longer really didn't give the local community much of a chance to get together and organize a way to employ local people to open these parks. It's a great concern.

I give an example of the Marten River park in the south end of my riding, about 60 kilometres north of North Bay along the Highway 11 corridor. In the Marten River area there are just a few outfitters who live there, a few residents who run some of the restaurants, the gas station, the agency liquor store that service the tourism. There's really not a community there that is prepared or has the viability to run a provincial park on behalf of the province.

I really think the province should stay in the park business. I think it's important that the province have a presence in provincial parks, give a clear mandate to the people of Ontario that they do believe in provincial parks, that they should be operated by the province, that all of those parks should remain accessible to all the people of Ontario and others who come to our province. They should pay for that privilege, for sure, and we should try to run them on a sustainable basis, but to start to say that these are businesses and that we've got a business plan now for these parks and even parks themselves will be profit centres, I think is really stretching in this particular area what the role of government is.

I don't think we're going to be running hospitals as profit centres. We'd certainly like them to be more efficient, there's no doubt about it, but I don't think we consider hospitals or schools profit centres. Likewise, I don't think we should be considering our provincial parks profit centres.

So I would say in our third reading debate that the ministry should be reconsidering its parks policy. We've seen through the Ministry of Natural Resources a business plan that is trying to privatize the whole operation. Basically we're going to give the stewardship of our natural resources over to private industry that exploits

those resources. I would want to make sure that if this is the way you want to go, we make sure that the enforcement is there from the ministry, its presence is still there so we make sure that our resources are handled in the most sustainable way we can and we know about in 1996. I think that's very, very important.

We've also seen the cutback of the fire bases across Ontario. We've seen the laying off of the MNR fire crews across Ontario, except of course that today we have more ground burned in Ontario in this fire season than we had for all of last year, and the ministry now is scrambling to recall some of those people whom they laid off; they're retraining some of those people they laid off; they're bringing in fire crews from other jurisdictions — other provinces and states — around the continent.

When I tried to make a call to my district manager of the Kirkland Lake district and the Swastika office today on another matter, I was told that that manager is up in Kenora managing some of the fires because of the shortage of staff the ministry now has. So I cannot conduct business with the district manager of the Kirkland Lake district, which sits just a few miles off the Quebec border, because he right now is out in Kenora, by the Manitoba border, trying to help manage the fire situation, because I would take it that some of the regular fire managers there are probably out on the line or out training some of these people whom we now need to have retrained.

I would ask in this case the parliamentary assistant, through him to the minister and to the government as a whole, to really start to reconsider some of these business plans that you're putting forward. I think the firefighting situation for northern Ontario forests is a very good example of where sometimes you move with too great haste and you can make a mistake. I think it's a good time, especially when it's such a grave mistake as this — we're losing more forests this year than we had in total last year — that we admit the mistake. I'm not going to call you on it; just admit the mistake and I'll applaud you if you bring back the adequate crews that are necessary. I'll applaud your saying that you made a mistake. I won't jeer at you, because I want to see the situation corrected. Before scoring political points, what I'm here for is to make sure that northern resources are taken care of. So I say to the government: Restore those fire crews to northern Ontario; make sure we have adequate coverage.

I know the minister has said, "We don't like paying people on standby." It's the same thing with the winter road maintenance that the Minister of Transportation has stated. But isn't that what our fire department is all about? It's the nature of the business: You just never know when a fire is going to break out. In the circumstance of forest fires, though, we actually have a pretty good indication of when forest fires happen. There is a fire season. It happens from about May to October of each year, but really the worst of those fires happen in June, July and August. So we have a scoped-down time frame over the calendar year of when we know there is the greatest need to have those fire crews.

The history of this of course has been that in the old days when logging depended upon the transportation of



the river routes, it was a winter operation. The lumberjacks of those days worked in the winter. They hauled out the trees via horse, they put them on the rivers, and when the rivers melted, the logs were driven down by the rivers to the mills at the end of the river or on the lakes where those rivers ran. Those people worked seasonally, but they also had a summer job and that was to protect those forests through the fire bases, through employment through the MNR. So they worked with the private forest companies in the winter season, and then after breakup, they worked for the government fighting fires, protecting that very resource that their livelihood depended upon. That's the seasonal nature of that type of work.

It's very, very important still to have fire crews in adequate numbers to protect our forests in northern Ontario. I ask the parliamentary assistant that he pass that along to the minister, that it's my concern and it's my other northern colleagues' concern in the Liberal caucus, and I'm sure all northern colleagues in this House, that we have adequate protection.

In wrapping up, I would say that I'm disappointed that the ministry brought in an omnibus bill that in the end, because of its nature, I'm not going to be able to support, though I do support one aspect of it, and that is strengthening the Game and Fish Act so that the prohibition of the sale of bear parts is tightened up in the province of Ontario. That's a good thing to do, and I applaud the minister for doing that.

1640

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Questions or comments? Further debate?

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** I spoke extensively to the bill on second reading, but there are some points I want to reiterate and reinforce on third reading this afternoon. What does the bill do? There are two things I want to focus on.

First of all, the bill introduces new user fees for independent loggers in this province, something the minister, when he was on this side in the opposition benches, promised that his government, when elected, would never do. The fact of the matter is that the government is now going to charge those independent loggers, who already operate on the edge in this province in terms of making a living, new user fees, fees for services that they previously received from Ministry of Natural Resources staff in this province. That runs completely contrary to promises the now Premier made both in the Common Sense Revolution and in the wrapup before and during the election campaign and runs directly contrary to promises the minister made when he sat on this side of the House.

I think it's shameful that nowhere in the bill does the minister have the decency at least to point out that what the bill does in its amendments to the Crown Forest Sustainability Act is to slap on new user fees to people who are trying to make a living working in the bush in this province, people whom he used to defend, people he used to say were already living on the edge, people who now are going to get a new user fee, courtesy of the Conservative government of Ontario. I'm sure they thank you for that new user fee.

Secondly, the bill puts in place the framework for the privatization of provincial parks in this province. Once upon a time former Tory governments would have considered provincial parks as a resource that we should protect for the benefit of all people in the province. Now we see this Conservative government moving to a framework wherein the only focus, the only driving force behind the maintenance of provincial parks will be to maximize as much as possible profits from those parks, will be to ensure that those parks at all cost make a profit.

There are some parks in this province that will never make a profit, that will never break even, but because of their ecological value, because of the value that tourists worldwide look for and come to Ontario for when they come to parks like Quetico, those parks should continue to be sustained by the province of Ontario. The underlying principle in their maintenance and protection should not be to ensure that they make money or make a profit.

We have a government that is not concerned about protecting natural resources in this province, that is not concerned about ensuring that folks in Ontario will continue to have access to provincial parks, but is only concerned about turning over the operation of those parks to the benefit of their friends, to make some money, instead of trying to ensure that everyone will always continue to benefit from those parks.

Lots of folks in this province can't afford a cottage on our lakes. The only access they have is to go through the provincial park system. When you put in place a fee system for some of these parks to make money, you effectively guarantee that most people won't be able to afford to use the parks, especially those on fixed incomes, especially the disabled. It's a shame that, in terms of trying to make money, we would look at a resource that should be protected for all the people of the province and figure out how, instead of making sure people can continue to have access, we can milk them for all they're worth. I don't think that's what former Tory governments had in mind when they set up the provincial parks system in the first place.

The minister, throughout his remarks on second reading, tried to tell this House that despite all the cuts, his ministry was somehow going to be able to continue to protect the natural resources in this province, resources like fish and wildlife and timber and provincial parks and aggregates, resources that belong to everyone. His comments are just rhetoric. The fact of the matter is that he is overseeing the gutting of the Ministry of Natural Resources in 1996-97. This minister will lose over 2,100 full-time-equivalent positions from his ministry; he is losing 20% of all cuts across all the ministries from his own. That ministry and those staff who remain, despite all their best efforts, will be completely incapable of protecting and maintaining the natural resources of this province.

If you look at where the cuts are occurring, you can certainly see the discrimination by this minister against northern Ontario. The fact is, 45% of the cuts of those 2,100 positions occur in small communities right across northern Ontario, in places like Temagami, Cochrane, Elk Lake, in a whole host of communities that look to this



ministry to have some viable economy in their communities.

What the minister is doing in many northern communities is ensuring that they will not have an economic future, because they won't have those public service jobs any more to maintain those communities. Sooner or later the school, the gas station and the grocery store in that community are going to close because those staff will have to go somewhere else to find employment, and with the number of people who are going to be left, there will not be enough people to sustain those communities.

That's what is happening. It's blatant, it's obvious and it's utter discrimination against a whole number of small towns in the special part of the province that this minister is supposed to represent as Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

The changes in this bill come against a backdrop that has to be repeated. That backdrop is that with the magnitude of the cuts, any positive changes that might occur in the bill will not be able to go into effect because there won't be the staff to make them go into effect.

It's well and good for the government to say that they are going to prohibit the sale of bear parts in the province, but if you don't have the conservation officers in the province of Ontario to enforce it, that's just rhetoric again.

It's well and good for the minister to say that they're going to protect the timber resources in the province of Ontario, but if you don't have staff on the ground to ensure that regeneration is occurring, to ensure that reforestation is occurring, to ensure that companies are undertaking sound, environmental cutting practices, that's just more rhetoric.

What happens is that you put all the communities that depend on those resources and all the workers who depend on the sale of those resources at risk. That's what the government is doing at this point in time in Ontario.

It's very clear, and I raised it during the debate, that the government will also be unable to meet any terms and conditions that they are obligated to under the timber Environmental Assessment Act. This government has an obligation under the force of law to ensure that the terms and conditions that were set out under the EA act are met, and yet, because of the massive downsizing, because of the massive layoffs that will occur at this ministry, they will not be able to meet any terms and conditions that have been set out and that do have the force of law in this province.

I want to give the parliamentary assistant just one example of one of the terms and conditions that has already been breached by this government. Condition 77 says very clearly that the ministry has to work with first nations in this province "to ensure that first nations reap some benefit from the allocation and the utilization of timber resources in this province."

That condition makes it very clear that the ministry has to work in partnership with first nations to ensure first nations people have training opportunities, have job opportunities, reap some economic benefit from the sale of wood products in the province. And it says very clearly that the ministry has to work to ensure that first nations are allocated timber resources and do benefit.

What has happened? Let me give you one example. Whitefish Lake First Nation had a meeting early in February with Mr Paul Wyatt, district manager in Sudbury, and a number of other MNR staff. It was agreed that the ministry and the first nation would work together to set up a working group to establish a process for the first nation to gain access to crown land for timber harvest in the next number of years and to allow them to have a better process to involve the first nation in the timber planning process.

1650

At that same meeting, after the ministry had made a number of commitments about working together, the first nation discovered that the timber they were talking about, the timber they wanted to get access to, was the same timber that this minister is giving away to the big pulp and paper companies and the big forestry companies as part and parcel of his secret negotiations to do away with all of the crown management units and give them over to the big pulp and paper companies and the forestry companies. The very timber which this first nation wants to have access to, and should have access to as part of condition 77, is the same timber that the ministry is now negotiating to give away, in this case, to E.B. Eddy out of Nairn Centre.

The chief of the first nation made it very clear in a letter he wrote at the end of April this year. I want to quote from it in the House today:

"However, at the April 26, 1996, meeting between your staff and mine, it became clear the ministry has no intentions of complying with the decision of the Environmental Assessment Board in respect to condition 77. My staff were informed that the ministry has been negotiating behind closed doors with the local licensees and with E.B. Eddy on a sustainable forestry licence (SFL). Once these SFLs are signed, it removes the ministry's responsibilities for the resources to the hands of the SFL holders. This is a direct defiance of the Environmental Assessment Board decision, which you have a legal responsibility to adhere to."

I suspect this same situation is repeating itself, not only near Nairn Centre but with a whole bunch of other first nations, who, under the terms and conditions of the EA order, thought they were going to have some access to some timber in this province and to benefit like other non-native communities do. The fact of the matter is, because of the secret negotiations that this minister continues to be involved in and because it is his preference to give away 8.2 million hectares of timber on crown management units to his friends in the pulp and paper industry, first nations like the Whitefish Lake First Nation, other non-native communities and other independent loggers will not get access to the timber that they have some entitlement to get. That is what I find so abhorrent about what's going on right now against the introduction of this bill.

We have a minister who comes and stands in his place in this House and with great pride presents this bill, and at the same time right across this province we have people who should get access to timber that belongs to all of us but who will not, because that timber is going to be transferred directly to the hands of people and organiz-



ations that already hold and have access to the majority of timber in this province.

The government had better step back and think again about what it's doing, because it does not create any new jobs for us to continue in this process, it does not create any sense of justice to continue with this process and it certainly doesn't help the ministry live up to its obligations under law to comply with the order that was set out.

Finally, I want to talk about firefighting. In the same context as I have raised concerns about the protection of fish and wildlife and timber resources, I have to raise the issue of fire protection. Again, what we see as a backdrop to the introduction of this bill is that with the cuts being made to this ministry, this minister will be completely incapable of protecting natural resources for the benefit of all.

We already know that as it stands at this moment we have lost a whole year's worth of timber because of the fire situation in northern Ontario. In direct contrast to that, we have a minister who in his attempt to save some \$4 million from the fire budget in his ministry did two things: closed 17 of 19 fire attack bases in this province, 11 of them in northern Ontario, and did not recall some 20 firefighting crews, about 60 people, in this province who last year did work on protecting resources and people during the terrible fire season that we had in Ontario.

We have the government trying to save \$4 million, and now we are faced with probably the worst fire season we have seen in a number of years and we're only at the beginning of it. The reality is, we have over 200 forest fires burning in the province now. We have almost all of northern Ontario under a restricted fire zone. We have out-of-province firefighters coming in to fight fires in Ontario at the same time as this minister has not bothered to recall the same firefighters who used to work for him and for this province last year, the same people who have worked any number of years to protect property and people in this province when it comes to fighting fires.

I was told by MNR staff yesterday that some of the firefighters from the US who were fighting fires in Wawa were asked two days ago whether they would like to continue to fight fires in northern Ontario and were sent up to northwestern Ontario. Maybe the parliamentary assistant can explain to me why we will continue to have out-of-province firefighters travel around and fight fires in our province when we won't even hire back the same people who used to work for the ministry last year. Where's the fairness in that? How can the minister defend that kind of action? There's something really wrong about that kind of process.

We also know that a number of the fire centres that were closed as a cost-saving measure have now been reopened. Despite the minister's rhetoric last week that through improved communications etc we can close some of those bases and continue to fight fires effectively, we know that a number of the centres have now been reopened, and I ask at what cost. The base in Ignace, for example, was completely shut down. The equipment was moved out. The telephones, the furniture, the staff were all moved. Last week, a controller from Sudbury ended up back in Ignace, reordering furniture, computer equipment, phones and faxes and getting all the firefighting

equipment back to Ignace to help the ministry deal with the terrible fire situation around that community.

Someone's got to tell me how that makes any sense. Someone's got to tell me how that has saved this province any money. It was a stupid decision right from the start. We told the minister in this House that it was a dumb decision to try and play God and shut down fire centres and hope that you weren't going to have a bad fire season in northern Ontario. The minister, if he had any decency, would at least stand up in this House and admit that he made a dumb decision, that it was a stupid mistake and that when this fire season is over those bases are going to be kept open and those staff are going to be kept on, because I suspect at the end of the day we will have spent far more money fooling around closing down and reopening fire bases than the money we could have saved by keeping them open in the first place.

In conclusion, let me just say that we are voting against this piece of legislation not only because it establishes new user fees, which the government claimed it was against and would not introduce when it became the government, and not only because it establishes a framework for the privatization of the parks system in this province, which we are very much against because we believe that parks should be protected as a natural resource and should continue to be accessible to all Ontarians.

We are voting against this bill because we fundamentally believe that, despite all of his rhetoric, the Minister of Natural Resources will over the course of this mandate not be able to protect the natural resources of this province on behalf of the people of this province. Because of the magnitude of the cuts in staff, done purely to finance the big tax break, he and his staff will be incapable in community after community in this province of protecting fish, wildlife, timber, aggregates and provincial parks. They will not be capable of doing so, and the losers at the end of the day will not be the government, unfortunately, but will be all of the people of the province to whom all of these resources belong. That's the shame of it.

1700

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Frank Klees (York-Mackenzie):** I would like to take this opportunity to thank the member for Timiskaming as well as the member for Sudbury East for their contribution to this debate on Bill 36. I think it's very clear from the comments that have been made that we do all have the same objective, and that is, the sustainability of Ontario's natural resources, that we're all dedicated to and committed to ensuring that our natural resources are available to the people in this province for many years to come and that they're well managed. What we disagree with, obviously, is how to get there in some circumstances. We appreciate the comments that no doubt are well-meaning.

I won't go into details, but it is regrettable that over the course of debate, both on second reading and again today, on a number of occasions members opposite have in fact misrepresented certain facts and details — to what end, I'm not sure. Perhaps you have some ideas as to why some of those facts would be misrepresented, but I



think that as people across this province view the proceedings here, one thing that they will know is that the initiatives that are taken by this government are taken to ensure not only the present-day management of our natural resources but in fact the sustainability of our natural resources for future generations.

We believe that because we are applying some strategies that are fiscally responsible that will in fact enable us to do things together with the private sector — and it's true that we look forward to working with the private sector not only in the forest industry but also in parks management — that in the final analysis will be the best not only for the people of Ontario fiscally but also for the natural resources of this province.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** I appreciate having the opportunity to make a quick comment on the remarks by the member for Sudbury East, someone who lives and works with people who make their living from the natural resources of this province, someone who represents constituents who are involved in resource-based industries, who represents constituents who are involved in tourism, who rely on the natural beauty and attributes of our natural resources, someone who has had responsibility in this portfolio area and, I might say to the parliamentary assistant, I think has a very strong grasp of the issues and the facts that are in dispute between the parties at this point in time.

I don't know how it is possible to comment on her speech with remarks like, "We're trying to do something in a fiscally responsible way," when she so clearly pointed out the ludicrousness, the inane policy of a government that would close fire stations, go through all of the costs of shutdown, of removal of equipment, of furniture, of communications, of supplies, and then turn around within such a short period of time and have to open it up all over again, have to reorder. I'd like to know where the original equipment went. Reorder probably new equipment in — I've seen this happen in bureaucracies before — move up all of the firefighting equipment again, re-bring the staff in, and to what cost? Not just fiscally, but to what cost in terms of quick response time in dealing with the fires in those communities, in those areas? What about the timber that we've lost? What's the cost of that this year?

Don't stand here in this House and tell us that you are going to handle the natural resources and preserve them for the public of Ontario but in a more fiscally responsible way, when you have laid off and handed pink slips to over 2,100 employees of that ministry. Over 20% of the cuts to the whole public service came out of the Ministry of Natural Resources, which means out of northern Ontario primarily. Over 40% of that ministry gone. Don't tell us you still have the resources to protect the natural resources of this province.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further questions or comments? Further debate? Seeing none, would the parliamentary assistant like to wrap up?

**Mr Klees:** I would just like to thank the members for their contribution to this debate, and we look forward to this bill being enacted to the benefit of the people of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker:** Mr Klees has moved third reading of Bill 36. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

Those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Call in the members.

**Mr Ed Doyle (Wentworth East):** Madam Speaker, it's my understanding that we have unanimous consent to delay the vote on this question until after question period tomorrow, Thursday, June 27.

**The Acting Speaker:** Agreed? Agreed.

*House in committee of the whole.*

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE,  
FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS  
STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1996  
LOI DE 1996 MODIFIANT DES LOIS  
EN CE QUI CONCERNE  
LE MINISTÈRE DE L'AGRICULTURE,  
DE L'ALIMENTATION  
ET DES AFFAIRES RURALES

Consideration of Bill 46, An Act to amend or revoke various statutes administered by or affecting the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and to enact other statutes administered by the Ministry / Projet de loi 46, Loi modifiant ou abrogeant diverses lois appliquées par le ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ou qui touchent ce ministère, et visant à édicter d'autres lois appliquées par le ministère.

**The Second Deputy Chair (Ms Marilyn Churley):** We'll just wait a few minutes so that staff can take their seats. Are there any amendments, and if so, to which sections?

**Mr Harry Danford (Hastings-Peterborough):** Yes, there are, Madam Speaker, and if you could just give me a second, I will find the right ones.

Sorry about that delay. I have four amendments; two relate to schedule A, one to schedule B and one to schedule D. They're all housekeeping amendments.

**The Second Deputy Chair:** Further amendments?

**Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent):** I have an amendment to schedule A to the bill, clause 3(2)(a); also to schedule A to the bill, section 3; schedule A to the bill, section 5; schedule A to the bill, section 14; schedule A to the bill, section 15; schedule B to the bill, subsection 4(2).

**The Second Deputy Chair:** Any further amendments?

**Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall):** I also have an amendment to schedule H of the bill, section 4, to do with subsection 29(2) of the Milk Act.

1710

**The Second Deputy Chair:** There being no amendments to sections 1 through 3, are there any questions or comments on sections 1 through 3? Seeing none, shall sections 1 through 3 carry? Carried.

We move now to schedule A, sections 1 and 2. Are there any questions or comments? Shall sections 1 and 2 of schedule A carry? Carried.

We move now to schedule A, section 3.

**Mr Hoy:** I move that section 3 of schedule A to the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:



"Limit on fees:

"(2.1) AgriCorp shall not charge a person fees or service charges related to the administrative costs of the corporation, including salaries and wage costs, employee benefit costs, transportation and communication costs, supplies and equipment costs, capital costs, and rental costs."

We believe this should be incorporated into the bill to protect the farmers of Ontario against a wide range of administrative user fees and service charges. This is not specifically spelled out in the bill, and I know the farm community and our party fear that the government will try to recoup, as the minister has said that he would like crop insurance to be self-reliant. So we have introduced this amendment to the bill and feel that it will add to the bill under schedule A.

**Mr Danford:** I would just like to make a couple of comments. I think at the outset we have dealt with all the issues in this bill. They've been dealt with through consultation and we've fashioned it in that order.

The commission is made up of members of their own industry. They will be directing their own industries, and to suggest that those members cannot make the best decisions on behalf of their own industry, I would have a real concern with. That's how it has been fashioned, and I would bring that point to this House. Surely the member across the way would not have concerns that the industry themselves could not look after those decisions and make them in the best interests of their own commodities.

**Mr Hoy:** Incorporated into the act also is that the minister may give directive to AgriCorp and perhaps, as I mentioned in my debate here on the second reading, the minister could direct AgriCorp to institute these on a wide range of issues such as salaries, wages and employee cost benefits. We think this protects the farmers of Ontario explicitly by putting it in the bill that this would not occur under an AgriCorp board of directors, either now or in the future, either now or with future ministers. So we've explicitly put it into the bill that this would not be allowed either today or some time into the future.

**Mr Danford:** The way this corporation is fashioned is that it allows the flexibility for the direction of AgriCorp to be dealt with by the members. The members represent the industry, and they can bring those concerns to the minister for consideration. But it comes in that direction and it is totally flexible. This government certainly has faith in those people who are involved with those decisions that they will reflect the true feeling and the needs and concerns of the industry, and we rest with that.

**The Acting Chair (Mr Ted Chudleigh):** Seeing no further questions or comments, Mr Hoy has moved an amendment to schedule A, section 3 of the bill. Is it the pleasure of the committee that this amendment carry?

**Mr Danford:** Mr Chair, could I move that all the votes be deferred until we've debated the whole bill. I believe there's unanimous consent.

**The Acting Chair:** If there are recorded votes requested, they can be deferred. Is there consent?

**Mr Danford:** Yes, we feel there is.

**The Acting Chair:** We still have to put the question on the amendment, however. Is it the pleasure of the House that this amendment carry?

All those in favour, please signify by saying "aye."

Those opposed signify by saying "nay."

**Mr Frank Klees (York-Mackenzie):** Mr Chair, could you clarify for us, please, what the amendment is that we're voting on here?

**The Acting Chair:** Section A, as moved by Mr Hoy.

**Mr Danford:** I think we need to clarify for all the members of the House, are we voting on the amendment as proposed or are we voting on the request that it be deferred till the end by unanimous consent?

**The Acting Chair:** We're voting on the amendment. If it is a recorded vote, it can be deferred, but the amendment must be voted in front of the House.

All those in favour of this amendment, please say "aye."

All those opposed, signify by saying "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

I declare the amendment lost.

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** On a point of order, Chair, and you can help me on this: I thought the vote was taken and declared. Then somebody stands up and says, "Oh, wait a minute, I'm not so sure I want to vote on that," so you revote?

**The Acting Chair:** The vote was not declared. I heard one nay.

**Mr Crozier:** Thank you. You've clarified it for me.

**Mr Hoy:** I did have an amendment that went along with the one that was just defeated.

I move that clause 3(2)(a) of schedule A to the bill be amended by adding at the beginning "Subject to subsection 2.1," which was just defeated.

**The Acting Chair:** That amendment is now out of order because of the defeat of the last motion.

Shall sections 3 and 4 carry?

All those in favour, signify by saying "aye."

Those opposed say "nay."

I declare those sections carried.

There's an amendment to schedule A, section 5.

1720

**Mr Hoy:** I move that section 5 of schedule A to the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Tabling

"(1.1) Within 90 days of issuing directives under subsection (1), the minister shall lay a written copy of them before the assembly if it is in session or, if not, at the next session."

We've entered this into the bill because we believe the farmers of Ontario will want to see what those directives are that the minister will be giving to AgriCorp. Could there be a directive to increase user fees in certain areas? Could there be other measures in business plans that the minister is directing AgriCorp to do? Notwithstanding that the membership, we are told, will be farmers, the minister still has involvement in the business of AgriCorp and we think it would be prudent to have these directives made public within 90 days.

**The Chair (Mr Bert Johnson):** Are there questions or comments on Mr Hoy's amendment?

**Mr Danford:** Very briefly, this government operates in an open fashion. The freedom of information act allows for adequate disclosure. To install this portion would create unnecessary red tape, we feel. This govern-



ment is trying to move ahead in consultation with the people involved with this industry to put forth a more efficient way of providing services to that industry. That's part of our business plan and this has been readily agreed to by those people involved in coming forth with this bill, so I would oppose that.

**Mr Hoy:** The member opposite says they want to cut red tape and so on, but if indeed the minister has sent a directive, all one needs to do is show that directive to the farm community and the public after 90 days. I don't see it to be an onerous or time-consuming request. However, a freedom of information request can be time-consuming and costly for the public. I think to draw conclusions that this could be done under freedom of information is really quite a leap.

The other thing too would be that if the minister is acting in full regard for and upfront with AgriCorp and the farmers of Ontario, I see no reason why he wouldn't want to have his directives made public within a 90-day period. I would then assume, if the government is not in favour of this, that perhaps they're worried that their minister is going to give directives that the public simply should not see. I think for the protection of the minister, for the protection of AgriCorp and the farmers who deal with AgriCorp, this amendment should definitely pass.

**Mr Danford:** I certainly agree with the member that there has to be confidentiality and everything built into this process, but there also has to be flexibility to allow this corporation to work. With the fact that it is composed of people within their own industry advising what will happen and even fashioning the future for this industry, we feel we've allowed that flexibility to be part of this the way it's proposed. Basically, we stand on those grounds. That has been put together in cooperation with and with direction from those people involved through the industry, and we're opposed to it.

**Mr Hoy:** From your answer, and I'm trying to read what you're going to do when you vote here, it seems to me that you do not want the minister to issue his directives in a public way 90 days after he has asked AgriCorp to do a certain deed. I think it speaks poorly of your attitude towards directives to AgriCorp.

I've no question about farmers being at AgriCorp and doing their best to operate it, doing their best to provide for farmers in Ontario. The issue is not the board; the issue is the directives given by the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs now and in the future. We know that the minister some day, some time is going to be forced to talk to his directors and tell them perhaps that what you're doing is not in the same regard as what I would do.

It would be interesting for people who see their farmer representatives taking an action and they say, "Well, we did this because we got a directive from the minister, but we cannot discuss that because the minister will not give it in a public way."

I think you should have second thoughts about this, and it may not be the minister of the current day. We're looking at ministers down the road. We're looking at boards of AgriCorp down the road as well. I think public disclosure, if this is the great consulting government, would fit in well with your thoughts.

**Mr Danford:** As I said earlier, and I'd just like to reinforce that, this government operates in an open fashion. This government certainly intends to continue to do that, and whatever party, and whatever minister is representing whatever party, I am sure would do the same. We think we've allowed for this to be dealt with in a fair and equitable manner and we feel it's been adequately addressed.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** I can't help but get into the discussion here. It seems to me that if the government wants to deal with matters and open way, this would be a natural amendment that it would want to adopt. What, after all, does it have to hide? What would the objection be? I can't understand why there would be some uncertainty or some opposition to this kind of amendment which simply ensures that things are done in an open manner.

**The Chair:** Mr Hoy has moved an amendment to schedule A, section 5. Is it the wish of the House that this amendment carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

I declare the amendment lost.

Shall section 5 carry? Carried.

**Mr Danford:** I move that section 12 of schedule A to the bill be amended by adding at the beginning "Subject to subsection 3(4)."

This amendment clarifies the fact that AgriCorp has the ability to invest funds, if you go back and refer to the other section, that will both generate revenues and serve to reduce the cost of programs to clients. That's the purpose of the amendment.

**The Chair:** Is it the wish of the House that this amendment carry? Carried.

Shall section 12 carry? Carried.

Shall section 13 carry? Carried.

Section 14.

1730

**Mr Hoy:** I move that section 14 of schedule A to the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Tabling

"(4) Within 90 days of submitting a business plan or a report to the minister under subsection (3), the minister shall lay a written copy of the business plan or the report, as the case may be, before the assembly if it is in session or, if not, at the next session."

**Mr Danford:** This amendment is the very same as the one we just went through, and we're opposed to it. It adds unnecessary red tape and does not necessarily improve the situation.

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** I cannot understand the government's answer, "It adds red tape." It simply says that you table the business plan. If you're going to do the plan, table it and let the public see it. I can't understand the concept that it adds red tape. It is, "Bring one copy over here, put it there and let us read it." That's all. Surely someone who believes in openness, where a good amount of money is going to be spent, can't deny a reasonable amendment such as that.

**Mr Hoy:** The government has said on the previous motion, which was similar in nature, that they've done



the consultative work and everything seems to be fine and in order and there would never be a day when we would need to question directives of any minister to a crown corporation such as AgriCorp; particularly, said the government, in light of the fact that always those directors would be farmers.

This one is similar in nature, but the Ontario Corn Producers' Association wonders about submitting a detailed business plan and reports to the minister, also that they should be made public so that producers can ascertain the direction of AgriCorp's future endeavours and examine program expenditures and insurance funds and funding levels etc.

Even the farm organizations have said they would like to see the last amendment and this amendment, most specifically in writing, passed so that we can maintain the openness that the farm community obviously believes is required and maintain the openness that this government says they like to enjoy. I can't see why you voted the last motion down, but I would forgive you if you voted in favour of this one.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** I find it passing strange that the member opposes tabling the business plan. I think one real issue here, that the government tells us all the time, is that they want these things to be more businesslike. Surely if they've gone through the process of building a business plan it would be to their benefit, and to the benefit of AgriCorp, to have that be a public document that people could look at and say: "Okay. Now I see the whole picture. I see how this is supposed to work."

I think it's really very difficult for the public to believe in these protestations about wanting openness in this process if this much-vaunted business plan is not going to be available to them to look at so that they know what's to be expected.

What is the use of a business plan if it's not there for the very people who use the service that's being discussed in that business plan? It doesn't make any sense to me and it seems to me that whatever the level of confidence of farmers in the province in this whole process, it will be undermined by not being able to read those business plans.

**Mr Danford:** Very briefly, this has certainly been discussed. As I said earlier in the presentation, the groups that are involved in this have been consulted. They have looked at it very thoroughly. They have accepted it and endorsed it the way it is, by far well beyond the majority of them. That's the reason why it's been constructed this way and presented this way.

**Mr Hoy:** I wonder if the ministry would supply me with the correspondence after June 7 with the Ontario Corn Producers' Association questioning this very clause and what correspondence you might have that says they've had a change of heart. It's not something I'm aware of. Notwithstanding their request, there may have been others who felt, as we do, that the openness between the minister and AgriCorp should be maintained and should be one that is open to all who question directives, business plans, and why those business plan copies cannot be given out.

This is something your government has initiated quite a bit lately. Everything you do is now called a business plan and people want to know what your plans will be, either from AgriCorp to the minister or his directives to AgriCorp, and what changes would take place.

Once the crown corporation is in place or this bill is passed, I have some fears that the farming public will have very little to say. As a matter of fact, it's been stated, "Why don't we pass the bill and we'll talk over the summer how we're going to implement it?" That is backwards. So I still stand that the minister and the business plan should have a free flow and be open to the public.

**Mr Crozier:** I have listened very carefully to the debate and I think some very good points have been made on this side that would make it even more evident, if this amendment were passed, that would help the government to be more open, but as you hear the debate go on, I think those who may be viewing it will see very clearly that the only reason this motion is not going to be supported is because it was brought forward by the opposition. I just want those who are interested in this debate, as I am, to see that the only real reason it won't be supported is because it's an opposition motion.

**Mr Danford:** I would just reinforce that it was mentioned about the business plan — our business plan has already been presented. It's already been in front of the people and they fully understand it.

**Mr Phillips:** I appreciate that the member just said the AgriCorp business plan has been presented. I wonder if he might give us the highlights of the AgriCorp business plan, because I perhaps missed the tabling of the AgriCorp business plan that he refers to and it may be helpful to me to know the highlights of the AgriCorp business plan. Would he agree to give us the highlights of AgriCorp business plan that he just referred to, and to table the AgriCorp business plan with us?

**Mr Danford:** With respect, I think we're here to debate the motion. I don't think we're here to debate the AgriCorp plan. Is that the reason?

**Mrs Boyd:** You just said you had it.

**Mr Bernard Grandmaitre (Ottawa East):** You said you had it.

**Mr Phillips:** Perhaps Hansard could be helpful for us. I think the member earlier said that he already had prepared and tabled the business plan for AgriCorp. I thought you said that, and I'm just asking, if you have done that, why you cannot give us a copy of that and the highlights of it. That, I believe, is what he said.

**Mr Danford:** I'm sorry if I misinterpreted what the member said. I referred to the ministry plan.

**Mr Phillips:** Aren't we debating AgriCorp?

**Mr Danford:** Yes, and if I made an error there and misinterpreted, or you misinterpreted what I'd intended to say, then that's my mistake.

**Mr Crozier:** How can you misinterpret what a person intends to say?

**The Chair:** Could I just intervene for a minute? I think Mr Danford is saying that he was referring to the Ministry of Agriculture's business plan as opposed to an AgriCorp business plan. If that doesn't help, then I'll stay out of it.



**Mrs Boyd:** I am really very puzzled about the reluctance to undertake a commitment to table these business plans. It certainly is what the government is asking of all its transfer payment agencies; it's what the government is asking of all its ministries and all the sections within its ministries.

1740

The member was quite right to say that to the extent that one can even describe what was tabled as a business plan — something was tabled; it didn't look much like a business plan that anyone would ever be able to borrow any money on or be able to run a business on in reality — if the member considered it important that the government tabled its business plans for the ministries, surely the member understands the real contradiction in his position that AgriCorp should not be required to give a business plan. This government and, frankly, previous governments have required exactly that of agencies, those that operate at arm's length and those that do not: to have business plans and to explain to the public how those operate. I can't understand why the member thinks this is an issue.

**Mr Hampton:** Let me enter into this and speculate about to why the government doesn't want to issue this business plan.

The real issue here has to do with services that used to be provided by the Ministry of Agriculture to farmers; these services were provided to them because they were farmers in the province, and no charges were made for these services. I suggest that what the government is planning to do ties into some of the earlier votes we've had; the government now intends to move a number of these services over to AgriCorp and start charging for them; thus the government's opposition to any amendments that limit the government's capacity to charge assessments or fees or costs. I suspect the reason the government doesn't want to table an AgriCorp business plan is because one would see right away from the AgriCorp business plan how detailed the fees, assessments and costs are that farmers are now going to be asked to pay. Again, it would be for services they haven't had to pay for in the past.

**The Chair:** Any further debate?

Mr Hoy has moved an amendment to section 14 of schedule A —

**Mr Hampton:** Mr Chair, I speculated on something. I would hope that the government would respond.

**Mr Klees:** Not on speculation.

**Mr Hampton:** It sounds like my speculation is indeed correct.

**The Chair:** Mr Hoy has moved an amendment to section 14 of schedule A. Is it the wish of this committee that this amendment carry?

All those in favour say "aye."

All those opposed say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it. I declare the amendment lost.

Shall section 14 carry? Carried.

Section 15.

**Mr Danford:** I move that clause 15(a) of schedule A to the bill be amended by striking out "subsection (2)" in the sixth line and substituting "subsection 16(1)."

**Mr Hoy:** We actually have a great deal of difficulty with all of section 15, clauses (a), (b), (c) and (d). It is of particular concern to us that the bill says "that any class of persons is required to pay to AgriCorp or a corporation described in subsection" and now they want to amend that subsection.

We have a great deal of difficulty with this part of the bill. We will be voting against this subsection because we don't feel that section 15 has any merit at all. The minister has said in the past that other governments liked AgriCorp legislation. I have a copy of Bill 53 brought in by the Honourable E. Buchanan, June 11, 1992, and this section does not exist in, we'll call it, the older bill, did not exist in our bill either. We see a proliferation of fees, the opportunity for charging persons fees through AgriCorp for services they may not even deliver.

They can amend this clause, and likely will, but the point is, we don't like any part of section 15(a) through (d).

**Mr Danford:** The amendment corrects an error in section 15. In an earlier draft it was referred to in this section and that sixth line should be deleted and this brings everything up and clarifies it, first of all, and makes it correct. That's the purpose of the amendment.

**The Chair:** Mr Danford has moved an amendment to schedule A to the bill, clause 15(a), AgriCorp Act, 1996. Is it the wish of the committee that this amendment carry?

All those in favour say "aye."

All those opposed say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

I declare the motion carried.

**Mr Hoy:** I move that section 15 of schedule A to the bill be struck out and replaced with the following:

"AgriCorp shall regularly consult with farm organizations in the conduct of its business."

As I mentioned in the previous amendment brought in by the government, we have a great deal of difficulty with this whole section 15.

**Mr Hampton:** Any clear reading of section 15 shows that this is the section of the bill where the government intends to impose levies, charges, fees, service charges and other types of expenses on people who receive services from AgriCorp, and these will be services that were formerly free to farmers. Formerly it was part of the infrastructure that would have been provided to farmers in the province to assist them in doing business, to assist them in farming.

Under this section the government will have the capacity to impose all these different kinds of fees, charges and costs, and it goes back to the point I think a number of us have been trying to make here, that really what this bill is about is imposing a whole bunch of hidden taxes on farmers and imposing a whole bunch of new costs on farmers for carrying on the business and for carrying on the kinds of activities they've carried on in the past. I think the government should just have the honesty to come out and say that.

**Mr Hoy:** To this section, particularly "that any class of persons is required to pay," even in the House I asked the minister if he would withdraw this, in that he seemed to feel that he did not require any fees. To the member



for Scarborough Centre in the House, he did not answer his question on what type of fees would be involved with AgriCorp. I too, following the member opposite's question, gave the minister an opportunity to describe what fees he was thinking about. If memory is correct, he talked about premiums, which have nothing to do with the administration of AgriCorp. Premiums are negotiated between the federal and provincial government and the farmers.

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We're talking about fees that may be imposed on persons of any class. They may not even use AgriCorp. We may be talking about fees for when you go to your ag office. We may be talking about a user fee for your farm property tax rebate, run through AgriCorp. Those are just a couple of examples in this whole section 15, which did not exist in previous bills. In order to have it brought to our liking, we have made this amendment.

**Mr Danford:** What this section does, as you will find all the way through the bill, it allows the commission to deal with flexibility and to manage any business, any function. They have to have that flexibility to deal with all the things that will come under their purview in representing the industry and the farmers and the processors and everything that's involved with that industry. This allows that commission to have that flexibility to deal with the matters before them and to make those decisions necessary.

It's interesting that the member would talk about levies. Certainly levies are not new to the agriculture industry. They've been in place for a number of years. There were superior court rulings in 1978. I know myself, as a milk producer, in working under the Milk Act and the Ontario Milk Marketing Board, levies were assessed from time to time to deal with different promotions or whatever was necessary within that industry. There's nothing different than has been practised for decades in this province of Ontario. This simply allows the commission to do the job that their producers and their industry are asking them to do.

**Mr Phillips:** To join in the debate a little bit more, we now are seeing what the government is all about. What you're about is finding money for your 30% tax cut, and the way you're doing that is you're imposing user fees on all sorts of people. The reason I raise this is so our farm community can appreciate the pattern. You ran on a campaign of saying you would not impose user fees or copayments on drugs. You made that big promise to all the people of Ontario. As a matter of fact, the document here said you looked at the federal budget and you've taken all of that into account. So you ran on a campaign that you would not impose user fees or copayments on drugs. Two weeks from now, as you know, there is going to be a major user fee imposed on drugs.

We had a huge debate around here on what was called Bill 26, the omnibus bill, and what was it all about? It was about saying to municipalities, "Sorry, we're going to cut your support dramatically, but we're going to give you the flexibility to go out and impose a whole bunch of new user fees." I don't know what it's like in your municipality, but my municipality is imposing user fee after user fee after user fee.

So we see a pattern here. I just want to alert our farm community that the pattern is that the government is going to cut its spending to fund a 30% tax cut and that it will benefit the most well-off in our province. I can assure you that this will result in user fee after user fee. In some respects, those who are best able to pay them won't find it a huge penalty, but those who may be struggling will find it a huge penalty. It's part of the pattern, and that's why we raise it.

We sit here day after day and see where this government is heading, and it is, "We're going to cut personal income tax and we're going to impose all sorts of new user fees." This is just part of the pattern. I think the public needs to know that.

**Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton):** I keep hearing on the opposition side —

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, you have to be in your own seat to speak.

**Mr Hoy:** In the paragraph that gives us the most difficulty, not to say that all of them do not, "fixing and imposing levies or charges, other than the fees and service charges mentioned in subsection 3(2)," which is way back over here, it says:

"AgriCorp may,

"(a) establish and collect fees and service charges related to the exercise of its...duties;

"(b) establish and collect penalties for the late payment of the fees and service charges...; and

"(c) on such conditions as it considers proper, lend money between the funds..."

But over here it says after subsection 3(2) "that any class of persons is required to pay to AgriCorp or a corporation" fees.

We have a great deal of difficulty seeing why you need this in the bill. I asked the minister to take it out and he would not. Previous bills do not have this language. You have the fee-setting in the third section of the bill. This is an expansion, we believe, of opportunities that lie ahead of you perhaps to charge a fee to the property tax rebate or any number of things you might choose.

I've met farmers who believe that the whole Ministry of Agriculture can be run through this act. We know that this government has an appetite for user fees. If they don't institute them themselves, they really don't mind if others do. We have example after example of user fees in the last six months, 12 months as never seen before in Ontario. Even though you may now say, "We have an idea of what user fees we have in mind," this seems to give too much scope. As I said, this government has an appetite for user fees.

**The Chair:** Mr Beaubien.

**Mr Beaubien:** Thank you, Mr Chairman. I'm in my seat now. I've learned something today.

With regard to the comments of the opposition, it's too bad that the member for Essex South just left the chamber, because he's a former insurance broker. I recall probably 12, 14 years ago, with the insurance industry in Ontario, that we became self-regulated. But first let me tell you that whenever there is change, there is concern. I was concerned and somewhat opposed to becoming self-regulated under the Registered Insurance Brokers of Ontario.



If the member for Essex South were present in the House today, I am sure he could vouch that the system has worked. Insurance brokers in Ontario have become self-regulated. They look after their own affairs. They're well qualified to look after their own affairs just like farmers in this province can darn well look after their own affairs and regulate themselves. If they don't abide by the rules and regulations, they can charge their own fees.

**Mr Hoy:** The government should know that the operation of crop insurance today has some similarities to general insurance, but they do not mirror each other. There was great involvement in the Crop Insurance Act (Ontario) prior to today. The premiums are cost-shared between the federal and provincial governments and farmers. We don't have that in other insurance businesses. They have to be actuarially sound. Premiums can't be set that do not leave the Crop Insurance Commission of Ontario in the red.

We're not worried about the premium side of it; it's the administration we are worried about. The administration of crop insurance is cost-shared between the federal and provincial governments, another thing general insurance does not have. The administration of crop insurance last year was \$10 million. We've just heard the government say it doesn't want anyone to know what the directives are from the minister to AgriCorp. They don't want anyone to know what the AgriCorp business plan is back to the minister, therefore we're very worried about whether you're going to try and whittle down the provincial share of administration.

1800

The farm community has no qualms if you're going to charge a fee on an NSF cheque, and frankly neither do I, but in this House no one wants to speak about what fees you may put in place. Particularly the minister, when questioned, goes off on some tangent that doesn't come close to fees. Ask the member for Scarborough Centre.

We can see certain business items such as a charge for an NSF cheque to be fine, but if you're going right into the administration of crop insurance or any other body that will be run under AgriCorp, we have great concerns. You just voted down an amendment that said you would not charge for mortar and bricks, that you would not charge fees for automobiles, wages or other packages of benefits; even by your actions you are really saying, "We're not sure where those fees will be today, tomorrow or in the future," and I think this particular motion to section 15 of schedule A is imperative.

**Mr Crozier:** I had been taught that it's unparliamentary in this place to refer not only once but several times to a member not being in his place, but let me assure you in this case it doesn't bother me. I was sitting in the west lobby watching this on TV, the way many people are at home, and seeing the sham that's being carried on, that the government amendments of course will pass and the opposition amendments of course won't pass.

In the comparison the member made about the insurance industry I think he's trying to compare apples and tomatoes. In the case of the insurance industry, I don't hear that the Ministry of Finance is trying to open up a Pandora's box of being able to charge fees, which is what

the government is trying to do in this case. I don't see this as a comparison, where the Ministry of Finance in the past has provided certain services and where in this case the farm community of Ontario is now going to be charged a whole array of fees. As it's been pointed out by several of my colleagues, they want to cut back on funds that are available to the Ministry of Agriculture, notwithstanding the fact that they also promised in the election just a year ago that they would never do this.

The comparison you're trying to make just doesn't wash. We have an instance here where my colleague and others have pointed out that you have this appetite for fees, and that doesn't compare to the insurance industry at all.

**The Chair:** Mr Hoy has moved amendment to schedule A of the bill, section 15. Is it the wish of the committee that this amendment carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it. I declare the amendment lost.

Shall section 15, as amended, carry? Carried.

Shall sections 16 through 19 carry? Carried.

Shall schedule A, as amended, form part of the bill? Carried.

Schedule B: Shall sections 1 through 3 carry? Carried. Section 4.

**Mr Hoy:** I move that subsection 4(2) of schedule B to the bill be repealed and the following substituted:

"Fees

"(2) The institute shall not establish or collect fees or service charges related to the exercise of its powers or the carrying out of its duties unless, before establishing and collecting the fees or service charges, as the case may be,

"(a) it has consulted with all affected agriculture associations on the fees or service charges, as the case may be; and

"(b) the assembly has approved the fees or service charges, as the case may be."

This section is also brought in to protect the farmers of Ontario from what could be the expanded use of fees. The wording, I think, is quite clear, that we want consultation to go on. These changes going through in this legislation are mostly administrative and not legislative, so in order to protect the farmers of Ontario, and indeed the industry as a whole, we believe that this change to the fee structure will be for the benefit of the farmers in the years to come.

**The Chair:** Is it the pleasure of the committee that this amendment carry?

All those in favour say "aye."

All those opposed say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

I declare the amendment lost.

Shall sections 4 through 15 carry? Carried.

Section 16.

**Mr Danford:** I move that section 16 of schedule B to the bill be amended by adding at the beginning "Subject to subsection 4(4)."

**The Chair:** Is it the wish of the committee that this amendment carry? Carried.



Shall section 16, as amended, form part of the bill?  
Carried.

Shall sections 17 through 23, schedule B, carry?  
Carried.

Shall schedule B, as amended, form part of the bill?  
Carried.

Shall sections 1 through 16, schedule C, carry?  
Carried.

Shall schedule C form part of the bill? Agreed.

1810

Schedule D.

**Mr Danford:** I move that section 1 of schedule D to the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

"(2) The definition of 'tribunal' in section 1 of the Farm Products Grades and Sales Act, as enacted by the Statutes of Ontario, 1994, chapter 27, section 19, is repealed."

**The Chair:** Is it the wish of the House that this amendment carry? Carried.

Shall section 1, as amended, carry? Carried.

Shall sections 2 through 7, schedule D, carry? Carried.

Shall schedule D, as amended, form part of the bill?  
Agreed.

Schedule E: Shall sections 1 through 6 carry? Carried.

Shall section E form part of the bill? Agreed.

Schedule F: Shall sections 1 through 21 carry? Carried.

Shall schedule F form part of the bill? Agreed.

Schedule G: Shall sections 1 through 11 carry?  
Carried.

Shall schedule G form part of the bill? Agreed.

Schedule H: Shall sections 1 through 3 carry? Carried.  
Section 4.

**Mr Cleary:** I move that section 29(2) of the Milk Act, as set out in section 4 of schedule H to the bill, be repealed and the following substituted:

"Commission's recommendation

"(2) If the majority of the producers in Ontario of a milk product who vote have voted in favour of a levy or charge to support a promotion-research agency, the commission may recommend to the minister that the levy or charge be established."

I think it's very important to be open with all the producers. The majority should rule in anything. I know that the world has got small now and you never know what is ahead of us. I think it's very important to have this in the act.

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** I wonder of the member for Cornwall could explain to me if he has any idea what the amount of the levy would be to those producers, because it's obviously a very significant amendment that he's placing, in his view, and it also would have a significant impact on the producers themselves. Do you have any idea what the impact would be in terms of the levy?

**Mr Cleary:** Farmers are not fools. They know what they want. They should have the opportunity. They've managed their own businesses for a long time and I don't think we should take that away from them. They have a great opportunity, and with this modern technology they have now, I think they know what they want. The majority should rule, and if they vote in favour of anything, they should have that opportunity and this Legislature shouldn't dictate to them what to do.

**Mr Hoy:** I wish the member for Mississauga South had been here earlier when we were talking about fees and levies. You seem to have a great concern that they might be large. I appreciate your question. Earlier your own colleagues had very little regard for fees: proliferation of fees, introduction of fees or expansion of fees. But I really do appreciate your question as we try to explain to the members opposite that farmers can ill afford fees unless it's determined of their own regard.

**Mrs Marland:** I just would like to tell you that I was not present in the House, but I have been watching the proceedings on television. My question was not with any inference attached, I respectfully suggest to the member for Cornwall. It was a sincere question on my part. This is committee of the whole House. I was just interested in being a participant with that question. There was nothing behind it on my part and there isn't anything now.

**Mr Cleary:** I'm sorry if I said something I shouldn't have said, but I know that the world has got small now and there are many products coming into Ontario from other countries. I think farmers, as I said earlier, are smart people. They would like to have the same opportunity here in Ontario as they have in other countries. I have talked to many farmers and they feel very strongly about the majority rules.

**Mr Danford:** I appreciate the comments from the member for Cornwall. If you look and follow what is proposed through the act, certainly the commission will be acting on behalf of all those milk producers. Nothing has really changed. There was a milk marketing board and the Ontario dairy farmers that represent them have always acted in that same way and have adequately represented all the aspects of doing business on behalf of the milk producers in Ontario.

I'd like to finalize by a comment from John Karn, the present chairman of the organization with regard to the milk producers of Ontario. I'll quote the whole thing:

"Although it is not the intention at this time for dairy farmers of Ontario to pursue the establishment of a national promotion research agency" — which the bill allows — "they do not support the proposed requirement for a producer vote." That is from the chairman of the board that represents them at this point in time. Point made.

1820

**The Chair:** Is it the wish of this committee that the amendment carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

I declare the amendment lost.

Shall sections 4 and 5 of schedule H carry? Carried.

**Mr Crozier:** A point of clarification, Mr Chair: When you vote in committee of the whole, and I need your assistance on this, can you vote if you're not sitting in your place? I'm just asking whether you can say "aye" or "nay."

*Interjections.*

**The Chair:** Order. The only time the Chair would object to someone voting out of their own chair in committee of the whole is during a recorded vote.

Shall section H stand as part of the bill? Agreed.



Is it the wish of this committee that schedule I be carried? Carried.

Shall schedule I stand as part of the bill? It is agreed.

Is it agreed that schedule J, sections 1 and 2 be carried. Carried.

Shall schedule J stand as part of the bill? It is agreed.

Shall the bill, as amended, carry? Carried.

Shall I report the bill, as amended, to the House? It is agreed.

**Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Environment and Energy):** I move that the committee rise and report the bill to the House.

**The Chair:** Is it the wish of the committee that the motion carry? Carried.

The committee of the whole House begs to report one bill with certain amendments and asks for leave to sit again.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE,  
FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS  
STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1996  
LOI DE 1996 MODIFIANT DES LOIS  
EN CE QUI CONCERNE  
LE MINISTÈRE DE L'AGRICULTURE,  
DE L'ALIMENTATION  
ET DES AFFAIRES RURALES

Mr Danford, on behalf of Mr Villeneuve, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 46, An Act to amend or revoke various statutes administered by or affecting the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and to enact other statutes administered by the Ministry / Projet de loi 46, Loi modifiant ou abrogeant diverses lois appliquées par le ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ou qui touchent ce ministère, et visant à édicter d'autres lois appliquées par le ministère.

**Mr Harry Danford (Hastings-Peterborough):** It's a great pleasure for me to have the opportunity to have moved third reading and to again speak on the agrifood and rural business bill.

It is symbolic that today, as our government celebrates one year in office, our ministry's year of progress has culminated in this bill. The agrifood and rural business bill is about this government's commitment to building a strong and vibrant agriculture, food and rural sector.

I am pleased that we have made much headway this year in preparing the way for innovation and growth throughout the sector. The progress has come through partnership and consultation with the people this ministry serves.

Last fall we held table talks with stakeholders across the province to determine their views on what services this ministry and this government should provide as we head into the next century. People said OMAFRA should focus on such priorities as research and technology transfer, investment attraction and advocacy, market development and rural economic development.

We listened and we responded. OMAFRA's business plan clearly reflects the priorities of our stakeholders. It's

built around four key principles: increased self-reliance for stakeholders, more efficient administration, reduced regulatory control and effective customer service.

The agrifood and rural business bill will permit us to put this business plan into action. It provides increased self-reliance and gives the industry the tools they need to get the job done. This bill streamlines administration and cuts the red tape and overregulation that's preventing the industry from realizing its full potential.

This bill enables OMAFRA to provide the services that our customers want in an effective and efficient manner. We know that this industry has the collective skills and determination to succeed. But that being said, we also know that its successful future depends upon many factors. Farmers, processors and others must continue adapting to the changing demands of the marketplace.

We will continue to build strategic alliances in partnerships and promote greater cooperation throughout the sector. To succeed in the next century, Ontario's agriculture, food and rural sector must be prepared to move in new directions. Individuals and companies alike need to innovate, to introduce new processes and new technologies and to embrace more efficient ways of doing business. That's the commitment of our stakeholders and that's the way this government does business. That's the way the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs will do business after the passage of this bill.

Just a few weeks ago, for example, we announced the \$15-million Grow Ontario program, designed to boost growth, increase investment and reduce barriers to agribusiness in Ontario. We didn't create this program in a vacuum. Rather it reflects the collective thinking of the ministry's stakeholders, the men and women of the agrifood industry and the residents of rural Ontario. In Grow Ontario we'll target critical areas, such as research, marketing and competitiveness. Grow Ontario is one of the bold new directions that have come from our business plan. The agrifood and rural business bill includes the legislative changes to put that plan into action. The vision of our stakeholders will become a reality.

It's no surprise that this bill has overwhelming support from the agricultural community. They helped write it by their participation and their consultation. With this type of support, this bill and the ministry's business plan, OMAFRA is prepared for the challenges that lie ahead in building a strong, vibrant rural Ontario. That's important, because as you know, Mr Speaker, when rural Ontario prospers, all of Ontario benefits.

1830

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Comments and questions? Further debate?

**Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall):** We are facing the final reading of Bill 46, and I'm still concerned about the impact this legislation will have on the farming community. As I said during the second reading debate, I believe this bill contains many new user fees for farmers, some clearly visible, some hidden, all the while without improving the delivery of farm programs and service.

This bill actually takes a wrecking ball to some of the fine long-standing programs we've had in Ontario for many years. Schedule A, the AgriCorp Act, to start off, calls for the establishing of a new crown corporation to



administer crop insurance. Admittedly, our government back in the late 1980s and early 1990s looked at introducing a form of AgriCorp as did the previous NDP administration. We did this largely because we were given clearly to understand that the federal government preferred to transfer their share of the funds to a crown corporation instead of directly to a provincial government.

As a concept, AgriCorp is not a bad idea. What is a bad idea, however, are the broad fee powers that are now being given to AgriCorp as a result of Bill 46. Why is this being done now? It was never considered before now because the minister has fired almost half of the entire ministry, approximately 900 people, only to have a portion of them rehired under AgriCorp.

Now farmers are going to be responsible through new user fees for the wages of these people and other administration costs. For this reason, my caucus is moving that only fees in relation to a farmer's share of crop insurance premiums be charged back to them and not program administration costs.

The pesticide inspectors: I'd like to speak a little bit about that. To move to other damaging provisions in this bill, I wonder how many members of the House and the general public know that Bill 46 effectively ends provincial inspections of Ontario-grown fruit and vegetables for pesticide residues.

On March 22 the Ministry of Agriculture and Food laid off 16 of their 20 inspectors, and I expect the remaining four will go before the end of the year. These inspectors had visited farms, packing sheds, wholesalers' stores and other markets, taking food samples to be sent to the ministry lab in Guelph.

They also ensure that all products sold in Ontario are properly marked with their country's origin, which is very important, because sometimes that's the only information the residents of Ontario get and the residents of Ontario want to buy Ontario foods.

I am not scaremongering here, as the minister likes to brush off the issue, nor am I accusing farmers of being deliberate in using too many pesticides. The simple fact is, however, that the pesticides do exist and farmers do use them, and we are fortunate here in Ontario to have responsible, caring farmers acting in concert with effective inspection programs.

Why shouldn't we? Over 100 active pesticide ingredients have been found to cause cancer in human and animals. Pesticide exposure has been linked to breast cancer, leukaemia, soft tissue sarcoma, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and cancer of the brain, lung, skin and stomach. Pesticide use also can affect human reproduction and has been linked to still births, birth defects, failure to conceive and low sperm counts in men.

The minister and the parliamentary assistant would like to dismiss this program as being unnecessary. Even the fruit and vegetable growers themselves have expressed concern to me about the program being cancelled. I know there is a tremendous record of success, passing pesticide inspectors, adding to their reputation as producers of quality fruit and vegetables in Ontario.

I know many have spoken to me about schedule H in Bill 46, for democracy for milk producers, and I had

hoped that the parliamentary assistant in this House would have considered the amendment. It's the only way the ministry of milk can have full assurance the new tax has the support and approval of the majority of milk producers. I'm very disappointed that didn't happen, because the majority in any community should be the direction governments go in.

I know there are many in our community here in Ontario who depend on fresh water, fresh air and inspected food. Under the changes in this bill, I'm very concerned about what may happen in the future.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Questions or comments?

**Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent):** I was pleased to hear the member for Cornwall talk about the inspections that have changed and the mode in how that will be done. It was raised in the House the other day.

The fruit and vegetable industry does like second-party inspections. It maintains their high-quality standards that they've always enjoyed. They want to see that maintained. I don't think they're welcoming spot checks with a shell staff.

As well, if they were to pay for their own inspections, which is possible, it creates an aura whereby you're inspecting yourself. They've always enjoyed the second-party inspection and therefore have been able to tell the public: "Yes indeed, the government checked our product. It's in the right package. It shows the right grade and it is of high quality." This can be of particular importance to markets that sell certain fruits and vegetables, and of course in the stores.

The boxes, the cases, or whatever manner in which these people sell their produce, are actually theirs. It identifies them, it identifies their farm and it identifies their outlet. They don't want to see that brought down to a lower level where some unscrupulous person may put substandard product into a package that they have always filled with a quality product.

The member had it quite correct that the fruit and vegetable industry is very concerned about the direction the government is taking, and in particular the laying off of many of the inspectors.

**Mr Danford:** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the members across the way. One of their concerns has certainly been addressed or brought forth here today, and it refers to the inspection. Certainly consumer health and safety is not compromised by the reduction of the grading inspectors. The testing for health and safety, to tell the fact of it, is actually the responsibility of Health Canada and agrifood Canada. Our testing will still continue.

The Ontario Ministry of Health, through the local health units, continues to monitor for food safety. Certainly there is no risk to the consumer through inspection. That high quality and those standards that have been put in place over the years, and that the industry has raised the level to, are certainly going to be there to be maintained.

This overall bill, as I said earlier and I have on other occasions, was certainly put together with consultation with all the groups involved. What this does at this point is allow those groups to directly represent the industry



and deal directly with decisions that will affect the industry, not only for now but for the future. That's very important to the industry and that's the message that's been given to us.

We've had all kinds of endorsements from this. I spoke to Tony Morris as late as 2:30 this afternoon. I quote, and this is referring to AgriCorp, "AgriCorp does offer some real opportunity for the future." It's also been endorsed by both former ministers from both parties, that AgriCorp was very essential for the farming industry. Today we have the opportunity to put this in place and give the industry the tools it needs to work for and to help support the overall industry.

1840

**The Acting Speaker:** Further questions or comments? If not, the member for Cornwall, you have two minutes.

**Mr Cleary:** I'd like to thank my colleague from Essex for his remarks to reinforce second-party inspectors. He well knows from the area he comes from how important it is to have inspected food. Many people look for that to make sure they know they're getting quality food. The consumers: We have all kinds of promotions here in Ontario to buy Ontario farm products, but they want to make sure they're quality products and inspected.

The member across the way had mentioned earlier about the inspectors. The government has a poor track record on bringing in its inspectors from the health unit on what we've just been through over the past several months with the strike. Many of our plants had to almost go down or go bankrupt because there was nobody to inspect the food here in Ontario.

I do hope this works well, but I know I've been talking to some of the commodity groups too, and my interpretation of some of the things they tell me, and their members, might be somewhat different to what I've heard in the House. I know that if we had got some of the amendments through the Legislature today, I think it would have been in the government's favour to accept some of them, because it would have made more of the residents of Ontario happy that at least the government was listening to the other party.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** I want to speak very briefly, because I don't want to repeat too much of what I have said in the past. We will be voting against this legislation today because despite the fact that it might do a few good things around the fringes, what this legislation is really all about, and I submit what differs, what sets it apart from concepts of AgriCorp in the past, is that this legislation is really all about piling a whole lot of new fees, assessments, charges and in effect hidden taxes on farmers, piling these fees on farmers and requiring farmers to pay for these things when in the past these have been services that have been provided by the Ministry of Agriculture at no charge.

What, in effect, the government is trying to do — and I wish the government would just be honest. I wish they would just come out and say, "Farmers are going to pay a lot of money now for services that used to come by right of them being farmers in Ontario, and services that used to come from the Ministry of Agriculture."

What is really going on here is this: The government is playing a shell game. The government says to people, "We are going to give you a tax break." They're going to play that up. That happens over here in the right hand. Meanwhile, on the left hand, you've got organizations like AgriCorp which are going to charge a whole bunch of assessment fees, charges, levies, and I expect they'll create some other nomenclature to designate it as well.

In effect, farmers are not going to get any sort of revenue break or tax break. They'll have an apparent one, but by the time they are finished paying all of these new fees, assessments, charges, levies, otherwise hidden taxes, because not only will they have to pay the cost of what formerly was covered under the Ministry of Agriculture budget but they'll have to pay a bunch of operating costs and a bunch of administration costs as well, and I expect we'll see even further creativity in this.

A few good things might come out of this bill on the fringes, but in essence what this is about is that this is a vehicle to hit farmers with a whole bunch of new charges, levies, hidden taxes — nothing more than that, nothing less than that. I wish the government just had the guts to be honest, to come out and say to people, "This is what we're doing," instead of engaging in a game of flim-flam, instead of engaging in a shell game and hoping that people don't notice what's going to happen.

The reality of this is that again, and we're seeing this over and over with this government, those people who are well-to-do will be able to afford these new charges, levies and fees, but those people whom we would generally call lower-income families, middle-income families, will be hard hit by it. The net result will be again a transfer of resources and money from people who are in the lower- and middle-income categories, a transfer of resources and money from them to people who are in the higher-income category.

That's what this government is all about. We saw that earlier here today. We saw examples of it. The removal of rent control is going to transfer money out of the hands of seniors who live on fixed incomes and other people who are on lower and middle incomes into the hands of property owners and investment dealers. We saw it with the people dealing in the food services. They're going to have their wages reduced from \$16 and \$17 an hour down to \$7.50, \$8 an hour, and the signal the government is going to send is: "That's the way of the new economy. Reduce people's wages. Reduce people's quality of life."

Frankly, that's what happening in this bill. People in middle-income categories, lower-income categories are getting hit so that people in higher-income categories will get a net transfer, will be better off. I just wish the government would be more honest about its ideology, about where it's headed, about who it's working for and about who it's working against. After all, if they believe all this stuff, one would think they would be honest about it. One would think they'd want to be upfront with their ideological convictions.

I said I did not want to repeat too much of what I said before, so I'll stop there, but I will repeat this: We will not be voting in favour of this bill. We will not be voting in favour of adding a whole bunch of new charges,



levies, fees, hidden taxes to lower and middle-income farmers in this province. We're going to vote against it.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments? Further debate?

**Mr Hoy:** I'm pleased to be able to speak on third reading of Bill 46. Our party shares the view that this bill is not similar to bills in regard to AgriCorp brought in in the past by both our party and the previous government. Even today, I mentioned during clause-by-clause that Bill 63 brought in by Elmer Buchanan did not have a section like section 15 in the new bill from the Tory government whereby persons of any class may be subject to fees.

Our concern about fees was such that we felt it imperative to bring in an amendment that would give some direction to AgriCorp about what fees they could not charge: They could not charge fees for salaries or other wage costs, employee benefit costs, transportation and communications costs, supplies and equipment costs, capital costs and rental costs. But what did we see? The government said: "AgriCorp will be responsible. They wouldn't do that." However, perhaps under a directive from the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the suggestion could come from his office, "Why don't you charge fees for some of these areas?"

Further to that, the government voted this amendment down. If they truly believe AgriCorp is not going to have an expansive fee schedule or one with new fees, they would have said, "This is a good amendment." But no, they voted it down, which leads us to believe and fear that in the future, perhaps under another minister, a directive could be that these fees should be implemented.

1850

There is a flow within the bill of directives, and we asked that the minister lay a written copy of them before the assembly, either while it's sitting or during the next session. We asked that within 90 days of issuing directives, the minister would do that. This way, the public would know whether the minister of the day did give a directive to AgriCorp on specifics of fees, and since the government voted down a list of fee schedules now possibly available, we should see whether the minister himself gave directives to charge fees to recoup costs.

I believe the minister said he wanted AgriCorp to be self-reliant. If that's the case, they're going to have to come up with many dollars to achieve that goal; actually, those dollars would be in the millions of dollars, as is the case in their administrative costs. It was suggested that the community of farmers or other interested parties could be agribusiness, that they have some interest in crop insurance; that we could use the freedom of information. The government said: "We want to cut red tape. We don't want the minister giving his directives in public."

If anything is more costly and takes more time for those who are asking questions about ministerial directives — freedom of information is one of those areas that one might call heavily laden in red tape. All the minister had to do was say, "Here is a copy of my directives to AgriCorp over the last fiscal year" or during the session of the House. A photocopy was all that was required, and I'm sure the ministry would keep these on file under

minister directives. But they voted that down. The open process of this government was shut down in this regard.

As well, under the legislation AgriCorp is to provide a business plan or a report to the minister, and we asked that AgriCorp lay a written copy of the business plan or report before the assembly in session or at the beginning of the next session. The government again voted down the disclosure of the business plan for AgriCorp or any other report they might give to the minister.

Even though we have great faith in the agricultural community who may be members of AgriCorp's board — there's nothing in the bill that says they must be farmers — we believe that the openness and the showing of directives flowing back and forth between this crown corporation and the minister himself should be made available to the public and the agricultural community itself.

In section 15 of the bill, there's a clause that says "any class of persons" is required to pay. In actual fact, we didn't agree with anything in section 15 of the bill. It gives the opportunity for AgriCorp to charge fees far beyond the crop insurance mandate that the government likes to say it will have. But we're also hearing from the farm community that AgriCorp may have moneys flowing to it in other regards.

We must now feel, as the government voted down our amendment, that the possibility does exist that "any class of persons," as stated here, will open the door to more user fees and more opportunities for fees. The same can be said for the section of the bill under the institute. We asked that there be a consultation with the affected agricultural associations on fees and service charges and that the assembly approve the fees or service charges, as the case may be. Again this so-called open government said no to that amendment.

There is little wonder that we are concerned about the proliferation of fees or the increase of fees already in existence, and I think the farm community has a certain nervousness about this. They believe that the AgriCorp board will be farmer members, but, as I said, there's nothing in the act that says they must be. It simply says that the board of directors of AgriCorp consists of all the members of AgriCorp, that the board shall manage and control the affairs, that the chair and vice-chairs will be appointed by the Lieutenant Governor from one or more of the board members. I don't see the word "farmer" there. I do believe, and hope, that it is the intention of the government to put farmers on the board, and we wait to see that happen.

In other jurisdictions — I want to talk about the United States right now and how they're dealing with their farmers.

"George McCaw, the provincial government policy analyst assigned to track the [US] Farm Bill's impact on Ontario farmers, recently compared what a model farm using Kent county per-acre yields would receive under Farm Bill rules. According to McCaw's calculations, a farmer harvesting 300 acres of corn, 200 acres of soybeans and 150 acres of wheat would receive about C\$28,000 from the US government during the 1997-98 crop year, regardless of market prices. The same producer would get C\$24,000 dollars in 1998."



The Americans are our closest trading partner and our closest competitive nation in regard to agriculture. South America also is a competitor, and indeed there are countries around the world enhancing their agricultural productivity even as we speak. But in the United States, and I mentioned this in second reading, these farmers will be paid these amounts regardless of price and regardless of yield. Here in this country we have a safety nets system — crop insurance being one, market revenue another — but they only trigger when yield or price go down, and of course it is of benefit to the farm community. But in the States they're going to pay these farmers regardless of price or yield, and we have to compete with that.

How does this tie in with the user fees? Had we been in the States, we would have been getting \$28,000 at the end of the year on the farm I just described, but here in Ontario we may be asking our farmers, particularly the young farmers who are just starting out, with high capital debt and very high costs to get into agriculture, and we're saying, "You may have to pay user fees for those things that the government at one time provided." I think it's going to be very difficult for us.

The member for Norfolk, on second reading debate, said, "That's a federal issue." Well, we all live in the same country. Here in this province we're going to have to protect our farmers so they can be competitive. I assume the member for Norfolk was talking about safety nets other than crop insurance, but he must remember that those are only triggered when prices go down or if there's a calamity which triggers a crop insurance claim, such as hail, which we have down in my riding currently. Vegetable crops are in very bad shape in certain areas, some wheat will not be harvested, the corn just looks like sticks, and soybeans, the last time I took a look at them, looked very bad. Of course they will avail themselves of crop insurance. They will ascertain a certain number of dollars from the crop insurance plan, and I do believe the crop insurance plan is very good. It provides a level of coverage at an affordable price.

1900

But can you imagine the farmer's chagrin when he turns around next year, after having a shortfall on his crop —

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I regret to interrupt the member, but I think his remarks are too important to be heard by so few and I think we need a quorum in this place.

**The Acting Speaker:** Would you please verify if there is a quorum.

**Acting Clerk Assistant (Ms Lisa Freedman):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Acting Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Essex-Kent.

**Mr Hoy:** I was speaking about a person who had been a victim of bad weather and who had suffered losses and had a crop insurance claim. It's very traumatic. The farmer of whom I speak in my riding was out in the middle of the night, walking through deep water, assessing the hail damage with a flashlight at approximately 3

o'clock in the morning. It's very traumatic to see something grow to where you're just about ready to harvest it — and we're talking about a vegetable crop — and then see it disappear in a few moments. Hailstorms tend to be erratic; they don't follow any particular pattern and they don't always follow the same ferocity across as they're pouring down.

It's very traumatic for them. They have to explain to their roadside customers at the roadside stand, "We don't have the produce this year, but we do hope you come back next year," and farmers always feel that next year will be better. The customers and the clientele these people have may go down the road a little way and —

**Mr Laughren:** Point of order, Mr Speaker: I'm sorry, maybe I miscounted, but I wonder if you could tell me if there's a quorum in the House.

**The Acting Speaker:** Would you please verify if there is a quorum.

**Acting Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Call in the members

*The acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Acting Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Essex-Kent.

**Mr Hoy:** As I was saying before the bells began to ring, it's very traumatic for these people. They want to maintain their customers, and they will. They're working very hard by buying product from others to have their fruit and vegetable stand operate throughout the rest of the summer, and it costs extra dollars to do that. But can you imagine the fear and the surprise they would have, after having all of this happen to them, that next year when they sign up for crop insurance, they find out they are going to have to pay a user fee for something the Ontario government has always provided to them at no cost? I'm particularly worried about the young farmers of Ontario and, as I mentioned, their high capital costs.

We heard today that this bill has been fully consulted: the groups know all about it; they like what they see. Going back to a question to the minister and some knowledge I had from talking to one of the farm representatives, I said to them, "Did you know the government was bringing in this bill?" and the answer was: "No. We knew the government was bringing in a bill. We didn't know which one. We didn't know what was in it. We were not consulted as to the contents." Yes, the minister was factual when he said, "I consulted and told them, 'I'm bringing in an agricultural bill,'" but as to the contents, this group told me they knew nothing about it.

So the minister was right. He said, "I'm bringing in a bill," and that was the end of the consultation. Even as early as this month, groups have asked about making certain documents public, the ones I just described, the ministerial directives and the plans from AgriCorp back to the minister, something the government did not want to happen, and they had concerns about that. This group knew full well or should have known full well that there was a high probability that farmers would be on the board of directors of AgriCorp, which the minister repeated over and over in this House even though it wasn't the subject material of the questions that were asked of him.



So we have these concerns with the bill. We're disappointed and actually quite amazed that the government wouldn't see our amendments as a way of clearing the air, of allowing people open access to certain directives, business plans, as this government likes to call most of what they do now. We're very disappointed that they want to bunker down and not allow for the free flow of information. As I said, it may not be the minister of the day who would give us problems or give the farm community problems in regard to some of these amendments. It may be future ministers. It may be future governments.

In conclusion, our party will not be voting in favour of this bill, a bill that, as I say, has very little relationship to past bills concerning AgriCorp. As a matter of fact, the bill was an omnibus bill, repealing and appealing many, many acts, and we find it very difficult, in light of what the government did today in amendments that we thought were constructive — we didn't think they were frivolous. We thought they were constructive for the government, and they voted them down. So we will not be voting in favour of Bill 46.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments? If not, further debate?

Parliamentary assistant, do you have any closing remarks?

**Mr Danford:** Just summation, or reply?

**The Acting Speaker:** There is no further debate. Therefore, would you like to close the debate?  
1910

**Mr Danford:** It's rather interesting to hear the members from across speak about the consultation process and how the groups were involved in putting this bit of legislation together. I'm surprised the members would dispute the comments that have been put forth by our agricultural leaders for Ontario.

I'm referring directly to the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and the president, Tony Morris, whom I spoke of earlier, and his quote to me as early as this afternoon that said, for instance, that AgriCorp does offer some real opportunity for the province and for the future of the Ontario farmers.

A quote from the CFFO, the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario: "As a professional farm group, the CFFO is more than willing to see agriculture take a larger role in both the design and delivery of services to farmers. Today's farmers have a good handle on sorting out what's really important to agriculture and they are increasingly willing to be involved in charting the directions for the future."

Our Ontario Dairy Council, which represents the processors, has endorsed it. The Dairy Farmers of Ontario, the producers, have endorsed it.

This government has taken a different approach. This government is prepared to work with those farm leaders, to speak on behalf of the industry and the ag community in general. They are prepared to listen to what they've said, and you'll see why the bill was formulated in the way it was. They're prepared to provide the cooperation that's necessary to support this industry from the beginning to the end.

Today, in my opinion, marks a real opportunity, an opportunity for the industry to take charge of their destiny, to design their programs, their promotions, that will enhance the agricultural community in this province. This government has faith in the agricultural leaders of this province and the agricultural industry as a whole, the industry that provides the consumers of this province with an adequate, quality supply of food for consumers. This government, through the preparation of this bill, is committed to the continuing support of agriculture, the most important part of our Ontario economy.

**The Acting Speaker:** Mr Villeneuve has moved third reading of Bill 46. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**Mr Trevor Pettit (Hamilton Mountain):** I understand that we have unanimous consent to delay this vote until right after question period tomorrow, Thursday, June 27.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent?  
Agreed.

#### TAX CREDITS AND ECONOMIC STIMULATION ACT, 1996 LOI DE 1996 CRÉANT DES CRÉDITS D'IMPÔT ET VISANT À STIMULER L'ÉCONOMIE

Mr Sampson, on behalf of Mr Eves, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 70, An Act to provide Co-operative Education and Film Industry Tax Credits, to create Economic Growth, to implement other measures contained in the 1996 Budget and to amend certain Acts administered by the Minister of Finance / Projet de loi 70, Loi créant des crédits d'impôt pour l'éducation coopérative et l'industrie cinématographique, favorisant la croissance économique, mettant en oeuvre d'autres mesures mentionnées dans le budget de 1996 et modifiant des lois dont l'application relève du ministre des Finances.

**Mr Rob Sampson (Mississauga West):** This bill implements key measures of our 1996 budget to restore confidence, create jobs and spur economic growth.

Bill 70 targets three important groups. I don't know whether you knew that, but it does. It targets employers hiring post-secondary students in co-op education programs; the television and film industry, a very important industry in Ontario; and small and medium-sized businesses that need new sources of capital to expand, and of course create jobs.

Our college and university students are among the greatest strengths of our future economy. We must ensure they have enhanced employment opportunities to lead productive and independent lives. By combining academic studies and work experience, Ontario's cooperative education programs benefit both students and employers. It gives students real-world experience and market-relevant skills. It makes it easier for students to make the transition from school to the workplace. It helps students earn money to pay for their education. And it provides real economic benefits to employers and improves



partnerships between businesses and educational institutions.

At present, more than 20,000 students are enrolled in co-op programs in Ontario colleges and universities. However, there is a shortage of co-op placements. That is why we are creating a cooperative education tax credit. This refundable tax credit will provide employers with a tax credit of up to 10% of the cost of hiring a student in a recognized co-op program. The credit is capped at a maximum of \$1,000 per co-op placement. It will encourage employers to provide more co-op opportunities to meet existing demand. Students will benefit from more placement opportunities.

It will encourage universities and colleges to expand their co-op programs. Because of the current difficulty in placing students, universities and colleges have been reluctant to expand these types of programs. This tax credit will also encourage private sector employers to play a more active role in Ontario's education system.

The skilled graduates of co-op programs make Ontario more competitive and attract investment opportunities in the province.

Bill 70 also assists Ontario's film and television industry. Ontario, as you know, has become one of North America's major film production centres, which provides skilled jobs for many Ontarians. Ontario's highly developed film industry infrastructure attracts major film and television productions to the province. In fact, we had one of them just across the street here the other day. However, the industry faces aggressive competition from other jurisdictions. This bill implements our budget commitment to provide a film and television tax credit to maintain Ontario's competitive advantage. It will also create more jobs in this highly skilled and knowledge-based sector of the Ontario economy.

This refundable film tax credit will equal 15% of eligible labour costs. The tax credit will be doubled for first-time filmmakers on the first \$240,000 of eligible labour costs. We are giving first-time filmmakers a bigger tax credit because we recognize the industry's high-risk nature. New filmmakers without a track record often face difficulties securing financing. The tax credit will provide stable and predictable support to the film industry and the television industry in Ontario. This in turn will assist the industry in planning and developing longer-term strategic alliances and securing the necessary financing. We are taking this action to ensure that Ontario remains a major player in the North American film production industry.

A large share of Ontario's new jobs will come from new and growing businesses. These businesses need sources of capital from investors who believe in their potential and are prepared to maintain the investment until the potential is fully realized.

Labour-sponsored investment funds were launched to provide capital to small and medium-sized businesses that could not raise capital in traditional ways. The response by individual investors to this particular program has been greater than expected. In fact, investors have placed more than \$1 billion in these funds to kickstart this important sector of the economy.

This bill will ensure that the capital raised by labour-sponsored funds goes to Ontario entrepreneurs who need

it. We are targeting emerging small businesses that are not yet big enough to raise capital in the stock market or the traditional sources of capital markets.

Bill 70 will also require that 10% —

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: It really grieves me to interrupt the member for Mississauga West, given the importance of his comments, but I wonder if you could see if there are enough people in the chamber to listen to his comments.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** Would you please verify if there is quorum.

**Acting Clerk Assistant (Ms Lisa Freedman):** A quorum is not present, Speaker.

*The acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Acting Clerk Assistant:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Mississauga West.

1920

**Mr Sampson:** I'm saddened to hear that the member is aggrieved for the third time this evening. I know he is quite interested in this particular bill, and I also know that means he must be supporting it, so I'll look forward to seeing that favourable vote when the vote is raised today.

As the member for Nickel Belt knows, Bill 70 will also require that 10% of a fund's capital to be invested must be invested in very small companies with no more than \$5 million in assets and no more than 50 employees. Of the capital required to be invested, only 15% will be allowed for investment in public companies. This is something the previous government was not prepared to do. These measures will ensure that more of the money is used for the original purpose of the labour-sponsored fund, that is, investing in small businesses.

There are also concerns about the time it takes for capital to be invested in business. At present, the rules require the capital to be invested within 24 months of the fund's year-end. This lag between the time the labour-sponsored fund receives the money and the time it is invested is far too long. The money is not helping Ontario business if it's sitting in fund coffers. It should be used quickly.

This bill will require that 50% of the money collected by the end of the RSP season must be invested by December 31 of the same year, and 70% must be invested by December 31 of the following year. If these rules are not met, this bill allows for the suspending of the fund's ability to issue certificates for tax credit. These measures will ensure the labour-sponsored funds make investments in small and medium-sized businesses and that they do it more quickly, which was the intent of the original legislation.

Bill 70 will help create an environment where business can create jobs and opportunities in Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South):** As the former spokesperson for culture in one past life, I just want to say how happy I am that this bill is being passed by our government. Obviously, investment in the film industry, we know, is a proven investment, and this is an investment through a tax credit system which is even



better than direct funding. We know that the payback is something like eight to one. When we have a tax credit we are still actually giving up something, but in return for that we are creating a huge number of jobs through the ripple effect that film production gives us. It's more than just the physical sense of hotel rooms and meals; it's the rental of equipment and trucks and vehicles and furniture and all the things that go into movie production. It spans the whole sphere of employment, not only in downtown Toronto but all the other locations in our province, and I'm very proud that this is going ahead.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further questions or comments? If not, the member for Mississauga West, you have two minutes.

**Mr Sampson:** I appreciate the comments of my colleague from the riding to the south, another Mississauga of great stature. I appreciate her comments in regard to support to the film and television industry. As I said in my earlier speech, I believe it was yesterday or perhaps the day before that there was actually a film crew outside the Legislature here, across the street, filming an episode of — I can't recall what the actual name of the television program was, but clearly a Canadian company that was working aggressively to provide jobs in Ontario and to provide jobs in the culture and the television industry; the film industry, more specifically. I think the initiatives we've laid in front of the Legislature today in this particular bill will indeed help that industry grow and develop, as it should.

The other initiative here that we need to speak to is the initiative on small business financing and encouraging the labour-sponsored funds to make the appropriate investments. I will give credit to the member for Nickel Belt, who I believe marshalled through the House a couple of years ago, in conjunction with the federal government, the labour-sponsored funds initiatives. I think the intent was there, but the delivery was somewhat lacking, as in a number of other initiatives that were brought forward by the previous government.

What we're trying to do here is to make sure that the funds that were raised are used for the purposes for which they were raised. As I said in my delivery, there is absolutely no reason and it's no value whatsoever to Ontarians, it does not create a job for Ontarians if these funds are sitting in T-bills and other deposit instruments in the hands of the fund managers. They need to be invested; they need to be invested quickly. They need to be invested as soon as the funds are raised, and indeed that's what we're trying to do here.

**Mr Trevor Pettit (Hamilton Mountain):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: It is my belief that the member for Nickel Belt, as a former Treasurer of the province, should have a little more respect for the decorum in the House. I don't believe food is allowed in the House, and it would appear that it is there.

**The Acting Speaker:** This is not a point of order.

**Mr Laughren:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: It is with a great deal of embarrassment and humiliation that I acknowledge the point made by the member opposite, and I would simply expand that humiliation and embarrassment to the member for Burlington South, who brought me the food in here.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** I'm pleased to rise to join the debate on what's called Bill 70 and to express some comments on the bill. The bill contains many elements and I want to comment on two or three of them; one is on the proposal for co-op students.

The government member who just introduced the bill pointed out that what this bill provides is for companies that engage a student using a co-op —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Phillips:** For those watching, we once again have one of the government members worried about the frivolous while I think the public is kind of interested in the substance. You can continue to make your nonsensical comments and interrupt the Legislature, but I think most of us will continue to debate the substance of the bill.

The proposal on the co-op students calls for a tax credit of \$1,000, and I think the government expects there'll be about 5,000 students who take advantage of this. The problem I see is the following. One is, as the government member has acknowledged, there are 20,000 students involved in this program right now. What the government is proposing is a tax credit for 5,000 of them. This is what the government expects; 5,000 will take advantage of it. I don't think we're going to see any new co-op programs started, or very few. There are 20,000 employers out there right now with the programs. I predict that at least 5,000 of them will apply for this and will get the credit for it. For them it is an encouragement to continue the program, but for students who are looking for new opportunity, this doesn't provide it.

At the very same time this is happening, we know the government is proceeding to have a 20% increase in student tuition fees for all university students, and for some, as you know, the increase in tuition fee is far greater than 20%. For our college students the increase in tuition is 15%. We have a program, and I don't mean to belittle it, but it is 5,000 co-op students out of, already, 20,000. It will in my opinion represent very few new programs for co-op students, at the very same time that our young people are facing an enormous increase in tuition fees.

1930

We've already seen the impact of that. Enrolments are down; applications are down. I talked on the weekend to a professor at McMaster who said that in order to ensure that they get the right number of students they've lowered their entrance requirements. At the same as you are doing that, we've found that the employment numbers came out — this is from the government itself; this is from the Ministry of Finance, dated June 7. The headline, as we all see, "Employment in Ontario decreased 17,000 in May." If you go back and look, we've now gone three months when we have lost a total of 10,000 jobs in the province of Ontario.

I think people out there expected, one year into this new government, the opposite. You are the ones who ran on a campaign of — and I remember it very well, because it wasn't hedged at all; it didn't say, "We hope this plan will create jobs." It said — this is the Common



Sense Revolution — “This plan will create more than 725,000 new jobs over the next five years,” 145,000 new jobs a year. What are we finding? It is shocking to me, absolutely inexplicable, how it could be that in the last three months Ontario has actually lost 10,000 jobs. I would say to all of us the most tragic part of it is, it is our young people who are bearing the brunt of this.

We will see now record job losses among our young people. We have never seen our young people with as few jobs as we do right now. The reported unemployment rate for our young people is running around 16%, but anyone who has looked at the numbers will say to you that there are about 120,000 young people who have simply dropped out of the labour market. You include them — and you ask any economist to do this; the Bank of Nova Scotia recently published something. They will tell you the real unemployment rate among our young people is well over 25%. As I’ve said several times in the House, that’s a tragedy.

Frankly, I don’t blame the new government for the situation. I am now beginning to hold the new government accountable, but I do blame them for not addressing the problem. It is an enormous problem, and for our young people I think there is no question there is a growing sense of anger and frustration, because if you look at the centre of your government’s platform, it is a 30% cut in personal income tax. That’s the cornerstone of your belief.

Who pays for that? It will be our young people. Our young people will not see that. They either don’t have jobs, or if they do have jobs, they are at the low end. Who benefits from that? It is the best-off in our society, the most able to cope in our society, the ones who have the most advantage in our society. That’s who’s going to benefit from this. At the same time, we see our young people with unemployment rates of almost 30%, well above 25%. We see their tuition fees going up this year 20%. Frankly, there’s no guarantee that’s the end of it. As a matter of fact, without question, the government has said the cuts are not over and education cuts will continue to come.

It’s 20% this year and more to come in the future. It is our young people who find they cannot get jobs, young people with unemployment rates at 30%. Frankly, in many of our communities it is our young people who are struggling right now. As the government has decided to cut its grants to municipalities, the municipalities have said, “The only way we can cope is to add user fees,” and what you’re now finding is user fees in libraries, in arenas, in gymnasiums, in all the things where our young people benefit the most.

The bill we’re dealing with here was positioned by the government as one of the things they’re doing for young people. Well, here’s what it is. It is, for 5,000 young people on a co-op program, a \$1,000 tax credit. That’s fine, but remember, there already are 20,000 of them out there, so without question it will simply be giving 5,000 of those 20,000 a tax credit. There won’t be new programs established, or very few, if any, new programs established for our young people.

I say on that aspect of the bill that for our young people who are frankly bearing the brunt in many

respects of the government’s cold, hard cutbacks and getting none of the rewards — with the 30% tax cut, if you’re making \$150,000 in this province you are very happy with this government because you’re going to get \$5,000 more a year in take-home pay. But who’s paying for it? Among others, it is our young people.

I wanted to talk as well about a second aspect of this bill, and that’s the plans on the employer health tax. Again, the government ran on a platform of job creation, and I guarantee you the public will hold you to this promise. “This plan will create more than 725,000 new jobs over the next five years.” A cornerstone of that was the employer health tax. The government said: This is a big job creator. We are going to eliminate the employer health tax on the first \$400,000 of payroll.

I was frankly surprised to find that this was your big job creator. I thought that when you ran and you said to the CFIB and small business: “This is our big job creator. This is going to be a job-creating engine, the elimination of the employer health tax on the first \$400,000 of payroll. This is the thing that’s going to drive it, and unemployment and jobs are our number one issue.”

Well, what did you do? You decided: “No, we can’t implement this very quickly. We’re going to implement none of it in 1995 after our election. We’re going to introduce none of it in 1996.” None of the employer health tax comes in in 1996. The big job creator, the one you went around saying is killing jobs, but “We’re going to create jobs,” none of this will be implemented in 1996. I was very surprised at that. You only begin the implementation in 1997.

By the way, at the same time — and this was something that came as a bit of a surprise to many — you cancelled a tax cut that my colleague Mr Laughren had introduced where the employer health tax was eliminated for the first year on new employees.

If you’ve read it, as I know all members have, it is the first thing in the bill. Number one: “to terminate the one-year tax holiday on increases in payroll effective at the end of 1996.” That’s the number one thing to do. Take the taxes up. The big taxfighters, the number one thing in this bill is to increase taxes.

Some of the members are looking incredulous, but look at the bill. Get your Bill 70 out. The very first thing you’ve done in the bill, proudly, “We’re going to increase taxes.” Many of your supporters at home will be shaking their heads saying, “I didn’t know this was the first thing in the bill, a tax increase.” But there it is, part I, amendments to the employer health tax. Number one, terminate that holiday. Get rid of it.

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That came as a bit of a surprise to many of us, because actually in a briefing —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Phillips:** No, no. In a briefing we’ve been told you plan to continue that. We’ve been told that that would continue because you were and I must say also ourselves were supportive of it when the government introduced it. It seemed logical: You hire somebody, you don’t pay any health tax on the first year. But that’s gone.

Furthermore, rather than implementing this right away, you’re phasing it in over three years. So it will be 1998



before you keep this job-creating-engine promise. I must say that as part of that promise, by the way — again, I do carry this document around. It's very interesting, because I now find that the things you said you were doing, you're not doing. Here's what you said you'd do on the employer health tax: "Under this plan, everyone will pay their fair share, and top quality health care will be available to all Ontarians. Specifically targeted for health care and geared to income, 'Fair Share'" — you were going to introduce a Fair Share health levy to generate \$400 million in revenue. "This will completely offset the \$400 million lost by abolishing the payroll tax on small business."

First you've decided, in your wisdom — or in the cabinet's wisdom; I'm sure the backbench had nothing to say about it — that your job-creating engine of the employer health tax is going to be delayed. And then, by the way, what you've also decided, because you went on to say in this document — it's very important to the people of Ontario. In two weeks, July 15, you're going to be in for quite a shock, because many voted for this government on this promise. What the government said was:

"For some time now, there has been growing debate over the most effective way to ensure more responsible use of our universal health care system. In the last decade, user fees and copayments have kept rising and many health care services have been 'de-listed' and are no longer covered by OHIP.

"We," Mike Harris and the gang, "looked at those kinds of options, but we decided the most effective and fair method was to give the public and health professionals alike a true and full accounting of the costs of health care, and ask individuals to pay a fair share of those costs, based on income. We believe the new Fair Share health care levy, based on the ability to pay, meets the test of fairness and the requirements of the Canada Health Act while protecting the fundamental integrity of our health care system.

"Under this plan, there will be no new user fees" and no new copayments. That was a big promise you made, and you've completely —

**Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre):** Come on.

**Mr Phillips:** The member for Scarborough Centre says, "Come on." That is the promise you made: "In the last decade, user fees and copayments have kept rising.... We looked at those kinds of options," but decided something different.

I wish I could say it as bluntly as I would like to but, Mr Speaker, you don't allow it. But on July 15 you will have fundamentally violated a clear, clear campaign promise.

By the way, just while I have the floor, the Minister of Health the other day said, "Well, we didn't realize the federal government might be cutting back." That was simply not true. In fact, this document, the Common Sense Revolution, said this: "Now that the Martin federal budget has been delivered, with its significant reductions in federal transfers, it is only fair to the people of Ontario that we publish our revised" promises.

So you can't blame the federal government for this. You had the budget, you looked at the budget, and then

you all published this document and you all ran on it, and on July 15 there will be a fee on drugs that you promised you wouldn't deliver.

So here we are. This bill, as you know, with the employer health tax provisions in it, where you had said it was going to be your number one job-creating engine, you have delayed it. And where you made the promises saying, "We will do this: We will replace the money lost in the employer health tax with another tax and we will guarantee that we will not increase co-payments or user fees," you violated that.

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham East):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: To correct the record on Hansard, the member is referring to the Common Sense document. I would prefer that he made a correction in his reference to "copayments." We did not make that reference in the Common Sense document. There are no new user —

**The Acting Speaker:** Please take your seat. Order. This is not a point of order.

**Mr Phillips:** I will just say to the member, those are weasel words. You promised that you would not introduce copayments. It's very clear: "In the last decade, user fees and copayments" —

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. We're debating Bill 70. Please stay on the topic.

**Mr Phillips:** I am on the bill, the employer health tax, where the government tied the two together and made a clear promise, an absolutely clear promise: no copayment increase, no user fees. If you want to go, as I did yesterday — my friends at the Good Shepherd lodge asked me to bring this up, and I hope they're watching right now. I was trying to be polite last night; I tend to be non-political at those things. One gentleman said: "You're being too polite. You go down there and you tell them what we think of that user fee. You tell them that they're breaking their promise." If you at the Good Shepherd lodge are watching right now, I'm doing that. I'm telling you, you broke your promise, and whether you want to hear that or not, I really don't care. There. I've delivered on that commitment to my friends at the Good Shepherd.

The reason I raise this is because the government is presenting the employer health tax as a job-creating engine. I ask this very logical question, which I think the public also asks. You ran in the campaign and said, "The employer health tax is killing jobs and the best thing we can do is to get rid of it to create jobs." You have to acknowledge that the employment situation is desperate. This document, your own budget document, shows more people out of work in 1996 than there were in 1995, and more people out of work in 1997 than there were in 1996. Your own document shows that halfway through your mandate, halfway through your government, there are going to be more people out of work than when you came into office. That is a disgrace. If I were in the back bench of the government, I'd say, "We can't live with that."

**Mr Jim Flaherty (Durham Centre):** That's not true.

**Mr Phillips:** The members say that's not true. It is true, and you'd better understand this thing, because you're being sold a bill of goods. The members on the back bench say, "No, that's not true." It is true. As a matter of fact, the Minister of Finance has acknowledged



it. It's your own document: more people out of work in 1997 than in 1995. That's not me speaking. I appreciate that the back bench is perhaps in shock because they've been kept in the dark on this thing, but it is time they woke up and realized the bill of goods they're being sold.

On the employer health tax, and I'm very much on that side of the bill, it is a surprise to most of us that the one thing which, when you were in opposition, you lauded the then NDP government for bringing in is the very first thing you're eliminating. You're taking taxes up. The second thing is that when you promised you would get rid of the employer health tax for the first \$400,000 of payroll, it will not happen for three and a half, almost four years, which comes, as I say, as quite a surprise to those of us who were expecting that the government actually believed what it said in its own campaign document.

I would also say that there are within the bill a couple of areas where one could be very supportive. There's no question that the film industry is a terrific industry for Ontario — we're very competitive, we do a terrific job in it — and we in our caucus are certainly very supportive of measures to make sure that continues.

Just to summarize on the net impression from this bill, first, for our young people this is a small bone being thrown to our young people while incredible sums of money are being taken away from them. They are facing tuition fee increases this year alone of 20%, in some areas much more than that, 15% among our college students. They are facing dismal job prospects; we have seen a continual drop in the number of jobs for our young people over the last period, and it continues well into the Common Sense Revolution. Our young people are being hit at every step of the way, and what are they hearing? Why is it all happening? "We've got to make these cuts so we can find the money for a 30% tax cut." They find that disturbing, that we cannot afford to help them along during their tough times in colleges and universities, can't afford to help them along when they need it most. Why? Because we've got to find \$5,000 a year for somebody making \$150,000.

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We sow the seeds of our own problems. Our young people, without any question, right now are extremely uneasy, extremely worried, and for good reason. In terms of this being a job-creating bill, the one thing the government said was going to create jobs — the employer health tax — is the one thing they've delayed.

The bill will proceed. It consists of cosmetic moves, mainly, designed to say we are doing something for young people when in reality they continue to be punished and continue to bear the brunt of a government that, in my opinion, four years from now we finally will see it for what it was: a mean-spirited government that cares for those who are best able to look after themselves and cuts adrift those who are least able to.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Laughren:** I've noticed since the government changed a year ago that the member for Scarborough-Agincourt's speeches have been much better and his criticisms have been much more pointed and effective than they used to be.

**Mr Chris Stockwell (Etobicoke West):** I've noticed since the government changed about a year ago how badly the member for Scarborough-Agincourt has done, and his speeches are not nearly as pointed nor as direct as they were when I sat in opposition. I'm fearful of this, and I think I'll just go over one of these days and see what's bothering him, because it's not the same Gerry Phillips I knew in opposition.

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** I want to congratulate the shadow chancellor for his excellent oration tonight. I can see why my friend from Etobicoke West would recoil somewhat tonight, because I think the shadow chancellor gives us a very good passing of the accounts. What one can promise in the breezy irresponsibility of opposition is not always what one wants to be reminded of when one sits on the treasury bench.

The only thing better than listening to the shadow chancellor — my friend from the Good Shepherd Lodge who just spoke was listening to a national economics panel on the radio service of the Canadian Broadcasting Corp this morning where they were trying to add up the arithmetic of Mike Harris's budgetary strategy. By their calculation, there's \$8 billion still to be made up. I notice that the shadow chancellor —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Conway:** I can assure you, the people talking were not the kind of boot-lickers that some in the ideological right might expect it to have. I'm reminded of a certain billboard campaign in the city of Toronto that — but no, that's not relevant.

Seriously, the member for Scarborough-Agincourt focuses tonight on something that I've got to believe is of concern to all, and that is, as we look at the economic forecasts and look at the unemployment numbers, surely the great concern is the prospect, or lack of prospect, facing young people.

I have been around some time. I can't recall a time, with perhaps the exception of the early 1980s, when so many well-educated, well-intentioned, hardworking young people were out trying to find a job that this economy, even in Mike Harris's world, is not producing.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further questions or comments? If not, the member for Scarborough-Agincourt, you have two minutes.

**Mr Phillips:** I appreciate the reference to "shadow." How does that expression go? I feel like a shadow of my current self.

I appreciate the comments of the former Minister of Finance. I don't often get a chance to say it — and this is not on the topic of the bill — but he's one individual you could never get angry with. He was completely trustworthy and I had a fine relationship with him, and I must say, to date it's the same with the current Minister of Finance.

The focus of my remarks was on jobs. Believe it or not, Ontario's just been through — actually, the economy grew better in 1994 and in 1995 than the government is predicting it will grow in 1996 and 1997. We've been through two years of very good economic growth. It may not seem like it, but the government's own statistics show that real growth was 5.2% in 1994, 3.1% in 1995, and the



government and most economists predict growth well less than 3% in 1996. In those two years of good growth, in 1994 and 1995, the number of jobs grew roughly 70,000. It looks as if 1996 job growth will not match that; we are going to see job growth of perhaps 65,000. That, the government itself says, will not even absorb the number of people entering the labour force. The government itself says there are going to be more people out of work in 1996 than there were in 1995, and then the government says there are going to be more people out of work in 1997 than there were in 1996.

We have a major employment problem, and what we're dealing with here tonight is not even a Band-Aid; it is barely a drop in dealing with this employment issue.

**The Acting Speaker:** The time has expired. Further debate?

**Mr Laughren:** I am pleased to rise and talk on this budget bill for the small amount of time that remains. It is truly fascinating to watch how the spin from the Tories has been unfolding since the election a year ago, when everyone in the province was filled with hope about jobs and tax cuts and preservation of services. That seemed to be the central message out there. Since that time, we've seen that it was nothing but a big lie — a big lie, I said. Services have not been preserved. You don't have to be a rocket scientist to see that all across the province services are not being preserved. We all know that. We all know that the tax cut is a sham; what people are getting in the tax cut is being eaten up several times over by increases in user fees. I can give you very specific examples from my own community, if you want that or if there's enough time, but that's a fact. People will laugh at the tax cut because it's being eaten up, as I said, several times over by the increase in user fees.

There's no doubt that people in the province bought into the Tory agenda, the so-called Common Sense Revolution, and for the last year they've been getting away with it and people have continued to buy into it because the impact has not really struck home yet. But you can't tell me for one minute that a year from now or two years from now the people in this province will have any delusions or illusions whatsoever about what this government is all about. It goes right back to the centrepiece of the whole thing, and I know the member for Etobicoke West is a big supporter of mine in this regard. The centrepiece for the Common Sense Revolution was the 30% cut of income taxes.

We all know that 30% income tax cut is going to be funded 100% with borrowed money — 100%. They're borrowing money on international markets to pay for the tax cut. There is absolutely no question about it, no question about it.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order.

**Mr Laughren:** The baying jackals must be called to heel.

It's clear that when we were in office we borrowed lots of money. We ran up large deficits. Of course we

did. But we didn't cut taxes and then borrow money to pay for the tax cut so your rich friends could be laughing all the way to the bank. That's what it's all about. You're not fooling anybody. You know and I know that 100% of that tax cut is with borrowed money. Every time you talk about the deficit, you're being laughed at, because everybody knows you're borrowing money to pay for the tax cut.

How can you argue otherwise? That's exactly what you're doing, and that's why, as my colleague from Scarborough-Agincourt was pointing out, the jobless numbers are going to increase in the next few years. It's already increased, the number of jobless in the province. Ronald Reagan tried it. Didn't you learn anything at all from your role model, Ronald Reagan? He tried the tax cut and it blew up in his face. The deficit tripled in the US because he did his tax cut and he did not get the revenues he thought he would get. And guess what? You're not going to get the revenues that you think you're going to get. It's already there in a preliminary way in the numbers that are now coming out.

What you really should be embarrassed about, you Tories, is the fact that every single penny of that tax cut is on borrowed money. That should embarrass you. If you cared a whit about the deficit in this province, you wouldn't be doing that tax cut for your wealthy friends. That's the only reason you're doing it. You have commitments to the people who funded your campaigns; that's why you've carried through on the tax cut and you're borrowing money to do it.

Mr Speaker, I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Acting Speaker:** Mr Laughren has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** I'll ask the question again. Mr Laughren has moved the adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

**Interjections:** No.

**The Acting Speaker:** No? Therefore, the debate will continue.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. I declare the motion carried.

**Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Environment and Energy):** Mr Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. I declare the motion carried.

This House stands adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

*The House adjourned at 2003.*



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Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)



Thursday 27 June 1996

Jeudi 27 juin 1996

Speaker  
Honourable Allan K. McLean

Président  
L'honorable Allan K. McLean

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers



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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 27 June 1996

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 27 juin 1996

*The House met at 1003.*

*Prayers.*

*House in committee of the whole.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### TAX CUT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH ACT, 1996

#### LOI DE 1996 SUR LA RÉDUCTION D'IMPÔTS ET LA CROISSANCE ÉCONOMIQUE

Consideration of Bill 47, An Act to cut taxes, to stimulate economic growth and to implement other measures contained in the 1996 Budget / Projet de loi 47, Loi visant à réduire les impôts, à stimuler la croissance économique et à mettre en oeuvre d'autres mesures mentionnées dans le budget de 1996.

**The Chair (Mr Bert Johnson):** Are there any amendments, and if so, to which sections?

**Mr Rob Sampson (Mississauga West):** Yes, Mr Chairman, I have three amendments. The first one would be to section 13 of the bill, section 9.2 of the Land Transfer Tax Act. The second would be section 66.1 of the Corporations Tax Act, section 20 of the bill. The final one is section 24 of the bill, subsection 1.1(4) of the Financial Administration Act.

**The Chair:** Shall sections 1 through 12 carry? Carried. Section 13.

**Mr Sampson:** I believe since this is a treasury amendment it will have to be moved by a member of cabinet, Mr Palladini.

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** I move that section 9.2 of the Land Transfer Tax Act, as set out in section 13 of the bill, be amended,

(a) by striking out "not after June 30, 1997" at the end of subsection (2) and substituting "where the newly constructed home is occupied by the purchaser as his or her principal residence no later than December 31, 1997"; and

(b) by striking out "1997" at the end of subsection (5) and substituting "1998".

**The Chair:** Is it the wish of the House that the motion carry?

**Mr Sampson:** If I could just elaborate on this particular amendment, the amendment in clause (a) of the above motion will extend the eligibility for refund to first-time buyers who purchase a newly constructed home and begin to occupy their home as their principal residence by December 31, 1997, even though they may not have received the conveyance of title. The present provision requires that such conveyance occur by June 30, 1997.

Typically when buyers purchase a new condominium unit, they begin to live there under interim occupancy

agreements with the condominium builder, and this would be well before the unit is transferred to them. The proposed amendment substitutes occupation as a principal residence for conveyance by December 31, 1997. For a condominium unit a conveyance is not available until a declaration is registered, and this typically does not occur until the units are sold, even though many purchasers will have occupied the proposed units under interim occupancy agreements for many months before registration of the declaration.

The amendment in clause (b) permits the refund to be made available to all buyers so long as title is transferred to the buyers by December 31, 1998. This gives a year after interim occupation for the completion of a condominium project and conveyance of title to the unit of a first-time home buyer who occupied the unit by December 31, 1997.

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**The Chair:** Further debate? Is it the wish of the House that the amendment carry? It is carried.

Shall section 13, as amended, carry? It is carried.

Shall sections 14 through 19 carry? Carried.

Section 20: Mr Sampson, please.

**Mr Sampson:** I move that section 66.1 of the Corporations Tax Act, as set out in section 20 of the bill, be amended by adding the following subsections:

"Regulations

"(15) The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations,

"(a) providing that the rules set out in subsection (9) do not apply and prescribing rules for determining the qualifying amount of an eligible investment in substitution for those rules;

"(b) prescribing investments, other than investments made in qualifying small business corporations, that will be eligible investments for the purposes of determining the amount of a bank's small business investment tax credit under subsection (2) if they satisfy the prescribed conditions, and prescribing those conditions;

"(c) prescribing rules for determining the qualifying amount of an eligible investment that satisfies the conditions prescribed under clause (b); and

"(d) prescribing rules for determining the amount of a bank's small business investment tax credit account for a taxation year if the bank has made an investment in an eligible investment that satisfies the conditions prescribed under clause (b).

"Same

"(16) A regulation made under subsection (15) may be effective with reference to a period before it is filed."

**The Chair:** Debate?

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** Just a question of the parliamentary assistant. We hear a lot over the



course of the years in the discussion in the media and the public in regard to the amount of money that banks make, the idea being that banks pay very little, if any, tax, in some cases with very large profits. I'm just wondering if you can explain under section 66.1 what this actually means for a bank such as the Royal Bank in regard its profits. What would that really mean in last year's taxation if this formula was applied as a tax on them?

**Mr Sampson:** Perhaps I could start off by at least explaining what this particular amendment is doing, and then I'll deal with that particular question raised, although I don't have in front of me the details to tell you what that particular item will raise as far as taxes. If I can just get to the amendment first, then I'll deal with that question.

The proposed amendment to the small business investment tax credit of Bill 47 is in response to submissions we have received from the Canadian Bankers Association and the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. It will give flexibility to cabinet through the authority to make regulations to extend the tax credit to investments made by banks in unincorporated small businesses — these would be partnerships etc; secondly, effectively changing the 10% rate of the tax credit by altering the portion of the investment that will be eligible for the credit; thirdly, changing the size of the criteria for small business, if that was a necessary direction; and fourth, changing or eliminating the formula that results in a lower tax credit for investments in larger small businesses.

This amendment will allow but not require the tax credit to be extended to investments by banks in smaller and larger businesses than the bill now permits, and allows but does not require extending the tax credit to investments in unincorporated businesses by the banks.

In regard to the question that was raised and directed to me, I don't have the specifics as to what that tax amount would be for — I believe it was the Royal Bank you questioned. It would depend of course on what assets the Royal Bank was able to demonstrate it had invested in accordance with the tax credit component in the small business categories that we have highlighted. Discussions are now under way with the financial institutions, the banks specifically, to determine how they will participate in this program and to what extent this particular tax credit will allow them and encourage them to participate in further lending to small business, which is what we're trying to do with this particular legislation.

**Mr Bisson:** To the parliamentary assistant, listen, let me be straight to the point here. There are many people in this province who feel that banks are making enormous amounts of money, enormous amounts of profit, and getting away, quite frankly, with not paying their fair share of taxes as compared to the average working person. I find it hard to believe that the Ministry of Finance — being a member of a former government, I understand how the Ministry of Finance works. It would put together some scenarios in regard to what revenue it figures this particular part of the act would raise for the province of Ontario.

I ask you again, if this part of the act, the amendments to the Corporations Tax Act, is in order to put a surtax on bank profits, what do you expect that to be able to generate in a period of a year, based on last year's numbers?

**Mr Sampson:** I'll reply by saying that the intent of this is not to generate additional tax revenue for the treasury. It's to encourage further investment and the creation of an additional capital pool for small businesses so they can get on with the business of generating jobs in this province, which is exactly what we are hoping they will do in order to improve the economic performance of this province. I want to tell the member that this is not an attempt to try to extract additional tax revenue from financial institutions, but to work with them to generate the appropriate capital pool to create jobs in this province through the small business sector.

**Mr Bisson:** This part of the act reads, "66.1(1) In addition to the tax determined under subsection 66(2) for a taxation year, every bank shall pay an additional tax for the year, equal to the amount, if any, determined according to the following formula...."

I understand how it works. The idea is that if they reinvest money back into the small business sector, they're able to get that back as a credit. But when I sat here in this Legislature and listened to the deliberations of the Minister of Finance putting forward his budget, this was billed as a surtax on banks in order, I would imagine, to respond to the issue that many people feel, which is that there are people in this province, especially the middle class, who are paying a higher rate of tax as compared to some of the corporations in this province, which pay little or no tax on fairly large profits.

1020

I understand what you're trying to do here, but I'm just saying you must have some sort of scenario that says, "Based on last year's numbers, we expect, if things were to be as last year, this would mean X amount of dollars for the treasury of Ontario." Can you respond?

**Mr Sampson:** I just want to correct the record slightly. I want to draw the member's attention to the fact that in the budget speech, page 22, the minister specifically referred to the fact that, "Banks...must play a key role in the new economy by increasing their longer-term financing of Ontario's...growth firms — especially smaller businesses." Clearly, the intent of this is to create that capital pool. What we're talking about now is a future tax. I will indicate to the member, if this is the answer he's looking for — and it may be; I don't know — we are hoping that the banks will participate in this program and that additional capital will be raised for small business and that the net tax raised will be zero. If they choose not to participate in this program entirely, the estimate of future tax collection could be in the neighbourhood of \$20 million, but that's only an estimate if the banks don't participate in the program. We believe they will and so believe there'll be additional capital created for small business that will encourage job creation in this province.

**Mr Bisson:** As the representative of the government in this particular case in the House, do you feel that banks pay a fair share of their taxes in the province? I look for



an answer. I take it you nod your head to the negative, or are you of the opinion that they are paying their fair share? I asked for a response.

**Mr Sampson:** If the member wants to have a debate on the taxation of banks, this is not the environment in which to do it. I'm telling him that the intent here is to encourage and work with the banks to create a capital pool for small business. I'm disappointed that the member has difficulty with that concept.

**Mr Bisson:** The parliamentary assistant suggests this is not the forum for the debate in regard to the amount of tax paid by the banks here in the province of Ontario. (a) We are in a budget debate and, (b), we are making amendments to the Corporations Tax Act that deal with taxation as applied to banks.

I understand that this section deals with trying to build a mechanism so that if banks don't reinvest money back into the small business sector by way of loans, they are penalized. I understand that's what you're trying to do with this particular piece of legislation, but I come back to the point that you as well as I know there are many constituents in our ridings who are paying a fair amount of tax in the province of Ontario, the same as any other province across this great country, and people are saying, "Listen, I accept I have to pay my share of taxes, but I'm offended when I see people who have more money than me paying less tax." I ask the parliamentary assistant again, does he feel that banks in this province pay their fair share of taxes?

**Mr Sampson:** I don't want to belabour this point and I think the member is. If he has problems with establishing a capital pool for small businesses, I hope he would make that statement in this House right now. If he has problems with the incentive, I hope he would make that statement here. I draw to his attention that the previous government did not do that. This is an attempt by us to create a capital pool for small businesses. We believe the banks can and should play a crucial role in that and we've designed that plan so they will.

**Mr Bisson:** Let's be clear here; I'll put it for the record. I haven't got a difficulty with what you're trying to do. Everybody agrees and understands that banks are fairly restrictive when it comes to their lending policies, and that is part of the problem we're having in the economy of Canada, not just here in Ontario. You know and I know. I've dealt with it on a personal level in regard to businesses in my riding which were in fairly good shape and went to the bank to have their lines of credit extended or to get money for an expansion of some kind, only to be told no by the banks because of their restrictive money-lending policies.

I understand what you're trying to do here. I haven't got a problem with the concept of this. I think it's a step in the right direction. I wouldn't do it quite this way, I'd do it a little bit differently, but I haven't got a problem with the direction. But if I'm willing to answer the question as to where I stand on this section of the bill, I'm asking you to do the same and give me the respect, and the rest of the members of the assembly the respect, of telling me where you stand when it comes to the question of how much tax the banks pay. Do you think

that banks in this province pay their fair share of taxes, yes or no?

I take it that the member is unwilling to answer, does not want to answer because he might find himself in an embarrassing situation. The reality is that you know as well as I do that there are banks in this country that made an enormous amount of profit last year. Profit is not a bad thing as long as it's shared back into the economy by the way of the tax system so that we can pay for our health care system, our education system and other services people require in this province.

If we're going through difficult times here in Ontario, as across the country, when it comes to trying to maintain services, we would expect that the corporate sector take its responsibility. We don't tax them more than they should be or to the point that they're not able to do business in this province as compared to the taxation system of other jurisdictions, but the point remains: The lion's share of the tax burden in this country and in this province is on the backs of the working class. I'm asking you yet again, do you think that banks in this province pay their fair share of taxes, yes or no?

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** Just to ask a question of my colleague opposite, could he tell us what percentage of taxation banks pay in the province of Ontario?

**Mr Bisson:** No, actually I can't, and that's the point: I cannot tell you what taxation rate banks pay in this province. The point is that there is a minimum corporate tax that was put in place by our government previously that applied to banks as well. I remember that in the budget of 1992 or 1993. The majority of taxes levied on banks are in the federal jurisdiction; I recognize that as well. The province has only a limited number of levers it can apply to the banks. But the government could send a good message here in regard to the taxpayers of this province: that banks will pay their fair share of the tax burden as compared to the people of this province.

If people are saying anything in this province, and I think this is being demonstrated through the government's move in the tax cut, there is a general feeling that there are people in our society who are getting away without paying their fair share of taxes. I, for one, get upset when I look at my paycheque at the end of the month and I see the tax I'm paying on it. I don't mind paying it, but I get upset when I look at certain people in our economy who pay less tax than I do as a middle-class working person. Banks are part of that.

I ask any of the government members in this House to stand up and tell this House and me and the people of Ontario, do you think, as Conservative members, that the banks pay a fair share of taxes here in the province of Ontario? That's what I ask.

**Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton):** I think the member for Cochrane South is trying to politically grandstand here this morning. I don't think it's fair for him to put the member on the spot, asking him whether the banks are paying their fair share. He doesn't have a bank statement in front of him; he doesn't have that information. The member for Cochrane South has admitted that he doesn't even know how much the banks pay in taxes. Consequently, I don't think it's a fair question to ask the member for Mississauga West.



**Mr Bisson:** I will categorically say that I feel banks don't pay their fair share. I remember, as a member of the government in 1992-93, through the budget process and the consultation we had done, looking at this particular issue. What I remember of the debate and what I remember of the figures is that in this province the percentage of tax levied by the province on banks is less than in any other jurisdiction. In other words, if you operated a bank in Ontario, you were more advantaged as compared to other jurisdictions in other provinces in Canada because the rate of tax applied to banks in Ontario in 1992-93 was the lowest or the second lowest in the country. I think Quebec was the lowest and Ontario was the second lowest.

We as a government moved, through the minimum corporate tax, to try to address some of that. I recognize the issue the members are going to raise: If you tax corporations too much, they're all going to pull their money and run away from here. The point is that we had moved, through the minimum corporate tax, to try to address that.

I was hoping that this government, in its attempt to redress some of the tax issues people really feel are an issue, would try to move on the question of corporate profit and the amount of tax paid by banks. I take it that if the government doesn't want to respond, it's because it feels that if it got up and said anything against banks maybe it'd get in trouble with its friends on Bay Street. Or is it that they're somewhat embarrassed to respond for other reasons? I'd be interested to hear what the members have to say.

1030

**Mr Sampson:** I've listened intently to the member continue on with his ranting and raving about taxation. I would draw to his attention that this is primarily the reason we are here in government and they are there in opposition.

The previous government's focus and, prior, the previous Liberal government's was indeed on taxation; across the board, on the personal and corporate sides, they increased tax rates.

The focus of our government is jobs. We believe that our role as government is to create the environment for the creation of jobs, not to create the environment for tax; just to tax for the purposes of taxation. We believe the taxation here — and that's the theme of this particular section of the bill — is to create an environment that will create jobs and growth and opportunity in this province, not simply to tax.

I draw the member's attention to the fact that his well-publicized corporation capital tax was not solely a bank tax as he is leading this House to believe today; it was a tax across all businesses — small businesses as well — paying taxes, and increased taxes, year over year over year, as a result of the implementation of programs of the previous government and the Liberal government that preceded that.

Our focus is jobs. Our focus is to create an opportunity for jobs, and that is what we are trying to do, working with financial institutions in this province.

**The Chair:** Our business is debating the amendment. Further debate?

**Mr Bisson:** Back on the amendment, to the government: I take it they're not going to respond to this question because they're afraid to stand up and say anything that would be contrary to bank interests in this province.

Yes, we as a government introduced a minimum corporate tax that applied to all businesses, including banks, which is what I said in the beginning.

The government takes great pride and the parliamentary assistant takes great pride in saying it is your agenda to create jobs. Where are they? We have been looking for the creation of the jobs that you've been talking about for the year that you've been in office, and the only jobs you can point to are \$7-an-hour, minimum wage jobs that you're creating as you're privatizing services in the province of Ontario, including the foodservices of this Legislature. That's one of the issues.

**Mr Sampson:** Mr Chair, on a point of order: Could I encourage the member to debate the particular amendment that we're speaking to?

**The Chair:** That is not a point of order.

**Mr Bisson:** I'm almost finished. I'm responding to the comments that the parliamentary assistant made. I didn't go down this line; he's the one who started it.

The premise of what you're saying in regard to section 66.1 — my point is there are many people in this province who feel they're paying a high level of tax and an unfair level of tax as compared to banks and other profitable corporations in this province. The question I have asked you is, do you think that's fair?

The government has chosen not to respond. I take it what the government is saying in its silence is that it will not respond because it is afraid that if it says anything, it might upset either the voters, if they were to hear the real answer the government wants to give, which is that they don't believe they should do anything when it comes to doing fair taxes in this province, or you have to think the converse is true.

The parliamentary assistant stands here and says, "We don't want to do that because we're creating jobs." The jobs that you're creating, my friend, are on the backs of hard-working people who are losing them as you're privatizing services across this province for a lower wage. We're seeing it happen right here in the Legislative Assembly in many of the services that are done. We're going to be seeing it at Ontario Hydro; we're going to be seeing it across all kinds of services.

When you talk about a lower tax rate as specific to this section, the taxes may be lowered on the personal income tax of this province by 30% over a period of years in what you're doing, but the reality is, you know as well as I do that the big benefactors of that policy will be those with a lot of money. People like myself and others who are low-income or middle-income people are not going to benefit, and whatever we do get, we're going to pay back in user fees. I can tell you now that the user fees that are applied in our community, in the city of Timmins and others, are starting to amount to a hell of a lot more than what we're going to get back in the tax break that your government is giving.

So I take it on this section, the government doesn't want to respond because it feels that corporations and banks are paying their fair share of taxes, and they're not



going to move in this area because they don't want to upset their big business friends on Bay Street who back their campaigns in the Conservative Party of Ontario.

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** The member for Cochrane South has a legitimate point. Surely the government has to acknowledge that by introducing this section on banks they are saying, "Bank taxes are too low." You are introducing a tax on the banks. You are saying: "We are going to increase the taxes on the banks. If they change their behaviour, they can earn the tax back, but if they don't change their behaviour, the taxes are going up."

I think it was a legitimate question: Has the government concluded that the taxes on the banks are fair or has the government concluded they should be increased? I gather the government's concluded they aren't fair and they should be increased. So I think we are debating a bill here designed to increase the taxes on the banks. I think that's quite a legitimate question to ask the government: What is your position on the taxes on the banks?

I think we're owed an explanation and a justification for what I gather the government has concluded: banks need to have their taxes increased. I think that the member for Cochrane South, if I recall his riding correctly, asked a legitimate question, and we are owed an explanation.

**Mr Baird:** I would ask the member opposite, who has indicated he thinks the taxes should be raised — raised from what? What percentage of taxation are the banks currently paying that would lead you to believe that they should be raised? I know you're a member who's always prepared, who doesn't make statements lightly, who would have done his homework on this ground. What percentage are the banks paying now, and why would you feel it would need to be raised?

**Mr Phillips:** You're going to have to listen more carefully to what I said. I said, the government — you — you have decided to increase the taxes on the banks, not me. You've decided that. That's what I'm saying, if you listen carefully, and I'm simply asking for the justification. Your budget calls for an increase on the taxes on the banks. If you don't understand that, and you seem surprised by that, then I'm surprised that you're in the caucus because, surely Mr Eves should have told you, we are increasing the taxes on the banks. He must have said: "In our opinion, they're not high enough. We've got to take the taxes up in the banks."

**Mr W. Leo Jordan (Lanark-Renfrew):** What's your opinion?

**Mr Phillips:** The member says, "What's my opinion?" Frankly, we are here to debate your bill, and if you're not prepared to defend your budget you should quit. You should quit.

**Mr Jordan:** You're not prepared.

**Mr Phillips:** The member, Mr Jordan, is saying, what's my opinion? My opinion is, we are here to debate your bill, and if you say the tax on the banks should be going up, then give us an explanation. If you can't explain it, get the Minister of Finance in here; maybe he can explain it.

**Mr Jordan:** Then debate the bill. You'd better read the bill.

**Mr Phillips:** So the people at home understand, we're having heckling here. Why? Because the government doesn't understand its own budget. The government doesn't understand that it is taking the taxes up on the banks and will not give us an explanation for it. That is simply all we're asking for.

**Mr Sampson:** I always appreciate when my colleague from Scarborough participates in the financial debates, and I do believe he does come quite prepared.

The member is asking for us to justify why this particular section is in the bill. He's quite correct: This does, if the banks do not participate in the plan, create an additional tax revenue for the province, tax expenditure for the banks to the tune of \$20 million. I said that a while ago and I believe —

**Mr Phillips:** Tell your caucus that.

**Mr Sampson:** No. The caucus is quite prepared to stand behind this.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** Some of them don't believe you're doing this.

**Mr Sampson:** The caucus is in support of this, as, I believe, the Liberal and the NDP are, unless of course they've changed.

**Mr Silipo:** They probably think you're lowering taxes for banks.

**Mr Sampson:** The member here is now heckling from the NDP. I gather he would not prefer us to tax the banks at issue, but maybe —

**Mr Silipo:** No, I said I agree with what you're doing.

**Mr Sampson:** Maybe that's a change in position from the NDP convention last weekend, I don't know. But I would say to my friend — and I believe he is my friend — from Scarborough that the intent, the justification here, is to encourage the banks to pick up a little bit more of the pace, pick up a little bit more of their involvement in providing capital to small business. I think the important question is, did we believe that the banks were playing as active a role as we would like to have believed they play in that sector? And I think the answer to that question, to my friend from Scarborough, is no; and that's why we've brought forward this plan.

The mechanism is, how do we choose to do that? Well, we chose to do that through a mechanism of adding an additional tax to their cost. There's no question about that.

**Mr Silipo:** There, that's finally on the record.

*Applause.*

**Mr Sampson:** My friend from Scarborough North is applauding. I don't always appreciate when he applauds as I get quite concerned when he applauds.

I will say to my friend from Scarborough, his colleagues in Ottawa, who have been in control for some time — and we'll see what happens when they go back to the electorate again, but anyway — chose to increase the capital tax on banks, but they didn't choose to link this by the way that we did, with what we believe is an appropriate job creation plan. They just said, "Give me the tax," and no provision or no requirement to earn it back. "Just give me the tax and I'll spend it somewhere else."

We took a different tack, again because our focus here is to encourage the creation of a capital pool that will be



used by small businesses in this province to generate jobs. Many of us have heard the horror stories of small businesses finding it very difficult to raise capital to create jobs in this province. I would say every member in this House has had those stories come to them, and I can speak perhaps a little bit more directly to those because of my prior experience.

1040

Clearly what we're saying to the banks is: "Listen, we want you to be more aggressive in lending and providing capital to small business. Here is the mechanism we have created to encourage you to do that, and we're prepared to work with you to create that capital pool." Because small business, as we all know, and as I stand here in this Legislature, is by far the biggest generator of jobs in this province. It's not the Fords and the large auto companies that create the biggest slug of jobs; it's small business, people working 12 or 15 hours a day, no holidays, working weekends, the small business owner who needs to generate the jobs, and they need capital to do that. That is the intent; that is the justification for this particular section of this bill and subsequent amendments to the section.

**Mr Phillips:** That was helpful, and the member for Cochrane South asked the question some time ago. Just to confirm, I think what the member said is that they've decided that the banks are not performing as they want. The way they will get them to perform is to increase taxes and — well, that's what the member just said. Mr Jordan is smiling, but they'll increase taxes, and if they perform as they want, they'll refund them. I just wanted to get that on the record because it's important for the future action of the government.

In terms of jobs, we are anxiously awaiting them. The headline in the Ministry of Finance document dated June 7: Employment in Ontario decreased 17,000 in May. We're down 10,000 jobs over the last three months in the province of Ontario. The government promised 145,000 jobs a year, and believe me, you will be held accountable by the people of Ontario for delivering that. So far it's going in the wrong direction, 17,000 fewer jobs in the month of May, so the Common Sense Revolution has been revolting for a year now without the promised job performance.

**The Chair:** Further debate? Is it the wish of the House that the amendment carry? Carried.

Shall section 20, as amended, carry? Carried.

Shall sections 21 through 23 carry? Carried.

Section 24.

**Mr Sampson:** Section 24 of the bill, subsection 1.1(4) of the Financial Administration Act. I move that section 1.1 of the Financial Administration Act, as set out in section 24 of the bill, be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Regulation

"(4) The Lieutenant Governor in Council by regulation may provide that an amount other than \$1,000,000 shall apply for the purposes of clause (1)(b) and prescribe that amount."

Just to clarify, the subsection added by this amendment will allow cabinet by regulation to change upward or downward the figure of \$1 million, which is the threshold

for determining which assets of the crown or crown agency, when sold, will have their sale proceeds credited to the Ontario opportunities fund for the reduction of the substantial debt and deficit in this province.

**Mr Phillips:** A question of the member. This has to do with the Ontario opportunities fund. Can the member explain to us what impact it will have on the debt of the province, how by implementing the Ontario opportunities fund the debt of the province will be changed from the way it was previously reported? What impact will this have on the debt of the province?

**Mr Sampson:** I'm not exactly sure of the direction of the member's question, but I'll attempt — it's one of the very few times that I have difficulty with his questions.

The intent here is to provide some flexibility in regard to the application of the sale proceeds of certain crown assets to the debt and deficit. So really the net impact on the debt and deficit we can't determine until we know what those sale proceeds are. Again, the intent is to be able to apply — if the sale proceeds are, for instance, \$750,000, under the current bill without the amendment we would not be applying that to the principal of the debt, but under this amendment we could.

**Mr Phillips:** Just briefly, the Ontario opportunities fund, with all due respect, is a public relations exercise and nothing more. It has zero impact on the debt, and I think the members opposite understand that. It's a trick to say, "Boy, we've created this opportunities fund," but let's imagine you sell an asset for \$1 million. Right now it goes to reduce the deficit. Whatever the deficit is each year, that's added to the debt. Now you say, "Well, we're going to set up this red tape called the Ontario opportunities fund, it'll go in there, and then we'll channel it over through to the debt." The net result is exactly the same.

You've got this Ontario opportunities fund, and Chelsea and Samantha Smith came down here, six- and five-year-olds, but the net result is exactly the same. Now, you can do it. You can put out your nice public relations stuff. You can say you've got it. You can set up a new red tape. But it has absolutely no impact on the debt. Eventually people will see it for what it is, which was a neat little public relations thing in the gallery where the Smith sisters — it was a neat photo opportunity. That's not the Smith sisters today; I mean on budget day.

**Interjection:** You're just jealous you didn't think of it.

**Mr Phillips:** Well, jealous we didn't think of it. But it will be shown for what it is, and we all will know that. So it's a one-day sort of PR exercise, but it's a permanent piece of accounting that has to go on that add costs to the people of Ontario purely for a public relations exercise.

**The Chair:** Just to clarify for all of us, I want to introduce Brian Gropp and his wife, Barbara. Brian is the manager of the Stratford and District Agricultural Society complex and certainly not the Smith sisters. Welcome to Toronto, Brian.

**Mr Sampson:** Thank you, Mr Chair, for alerting me as to who was in the gallery. I appreciate that.

In response to, I think he still is, my friend from Scarborough, I want to tell him that he may see this as a public relations fund but, frankly, I think people who make contributions towards the net reduction of the debt



of this province need to be assured that those funds will go there. They need to be assured that those funds won't be —

**Mr Baird:** Used for current spending.

**Mr Sampson:** Well, redirected? We've seen a little bit of redirection in the previous government's management of the fiscal books of this province. When I say a wee bit, I'm withholding my comments slightly. I think the people of Ontario deserve to be assured that moneys placed in that particular fund for the purposes of debt reduction will indeed reduce the debt and not be spent in other areas where they were not intended to be spent. It's not a public relations exercise; it's purely — I was going to say something but the member for Beaches-Woodbine is still recovering from last weekend.

1050

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** Now, be nice.

**Mr Sampson:** You were very nice to me; I appreciate that. I'll withdraw that comment.

It's not a public relations exercise. This is an exercise to provide some level of confidence to the taxpayers of this province that we are going to seriously address the reduction of the deficit and debt in this province.

**The Chair:** Further debate? Is it the wish of the House that the amendment carry? It is carried.

Shall section 24 of the bill, as amended, carry? It is carried.

Shall sections 25 through 28 of the bill carry? They are carried.

Shall sections 1 through 3 of the schedule carry? They are carried.

Shall the schedule stand as part of the bill? It is carried.

Shall the title carry? It is carried.

Shall the bill, as amended, carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

Those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. It is carried.

Shall I report the bill to the House? It is agreed.

**Hon Mr Palladini:** I move that the committee rise and report.

**The Chair:** Shall the motion carry? It is carried.

The committee of the whole House begs to report one bill with certain amendments and asks for leave to sit again.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Shall the report be received and adopted? It is agreed.

## TAX CUT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH ACT, 1996

### LOI DE 1996 SUR LA RÉDUCTION D'IMPÔTS ET LA CROISSANCE ÉCONOMIQUE

Mr Sampson moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 47, An Act to cut taxes, to stimulate economic growth and to implement other measures contained in the 1996 Budget / Projet de loi 47, Loi visant à réduire les impôts, à stimuler la croissance économique et à mettre en oeuvre d'autres mesures mentionnées dans le budget de 1996.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Mr Sampson?

**Mr Rob Sampson (Mississauga West):** I do not have any further comments.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North):** What an honour and a privilege it is for me to respond to this long-awaited budget of this Conservative government, which had waited such a long time to present the budget to this House. I thought that with the fiscally responsible manner they ran on, one of the first issues of the day when they arrived would be to bring forth a budget. However, we waited and we waited, and here it is. This opportunity is given to me to respond to that. There are so many things that have happened so far over the year of this government that I may just focus on a couple of issues here that are extremely important to the people.

I would first say that my understanding for a government to present a budget is the way in which it distributes the wealth of this province, in a manner that would make sure that all those in our society are equitably looked after, especially those who are most vulnerable, especially those who are finding it very difficult to find jobs, find homes, get on with life — the disabled, the seniors — who need the support. This is an extremely rich province. With all that is being said about deficit and debt, this is an extremely rich province. The problem we have of course is how we distribute that wealth, and the Conservative government has come consistently — their ideology is to give it to the rich and then hope that when the rich are well satisfied what is left over will be given to those who are disabled or discouraged, the seniors — those who need it more than anybody else.

The problem we have though with that kind of theory, which they call the trickle-down theory, is that the appetite of the rich is so enormous that they find other bellies, even outside Canada. Therefore, by the time the others are to get some of that wealth, nothing is there, so we scream about debt and deficit and focus on that.

But let me emphasize that as long as I am here and as long as many of my colleagues in the opposition are able to say to them, "We will not allow you to bully your way through" — and one of the first things this arrogant bully government has done is to make sure that we have a bill, legislation, that gives it ultimate control. In a democratic way, of course, we feel there is a process to do that. If you want ultimate control, you put forward legislation.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** There's much too much talking. There is only one member who has the floor. He is the only one I would like to hear.

**Mr Curling:** I appreciate that very much, Mr Speaker, and I hope they would have taken the approach you have taken, because I know it's very difficult to listen. It's very difficult to understand that the things you are doing to the poor and to those who are the most disabled in our society — although you're doing it, you're closing your eyes. Those who are freezing on the streets without any homes you hope will just go away. For anyone to bring it forward to you, it's a bit of an embarrassment. The government — I know they have a soul, I know they have a heart, but someone has to tell them. While we tell them that, it's a bit painful, so they respond in that manner. So I'm glad, Mr Speaker, that you maintained



some order so they'd listen. If they don't, they can leave if they want or they can read the Hansard, so to speak.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Scarborough North has the floor. The rest of you will get your turn. I'd like to hear the debate from him right now.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Curling:** Mr Speaker, regardless of the noise, I'll remind the Tory government, I'll remind those people without a heart that when they tried any kind of legislation itself —

*Interjections.*

**Mr Curling:** It's okay, Mr Speaker, I'll speak above them. I'm telling you, the people have more power than you. The people out there whom you are discriminating against, whom you are depriving of their basic income, whom you are depriving of the basic way of training, whom you're depriving of education, are much more powerful than you. This democratic process works very well. The thing is that many of us who believe that we are more powerful than the cause, then the cause will get you somehow sooner or later. I, on my side, hope much sooner than later.

1100

Let me just focus directly on a plot that this government has done. I want the people of this province to understand that, and if you feel, as one of the poor that will be reeling with this kind of pain, you will then sooner or later realize what this vicious, dictatorial government has done.

I want to go back to Bill 26 when they, in a democratic way, should have put this process through in a manner that we all can debate and understand it. These people were running this bill through in a very short time, hoping that of course the members over there who follow blindly their leader would not understand the implications of this bill. Even today, many of their own members, many of the members of the Tory party, of the Conservative Party, are asking many of their ministers about the user fees that have invaded their municipalities and invaded their community, not realizing that we were warning them all along that when they brought this Bill 26 in, the kind of power that they were giving and the kind of manner in which it was being administered was basically to change the name of taxation into user fees and copayments. The individual on the street, the individual in the home, the individual community is paying more today than they were when this government took place.

I want to speak about this plot, this plot that this government has done.

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel):** A plot?

**Mr Curling:** The plot that this government had started immediately when it came into office. And I would ask you, Mr Speaker — and I will respond because I know you know the answer — the first thing they did was to attack the poor. They took 22% from the most vulnerable people in our society, 22% of their income from them. How would you, Mr Speaker, or many of these members here feel if they had taken 22% of your salaries? You'd be screaming and doing all sorts of things. I think the

first thing you should have started is cut 22% from your income and then see how it felt.

They took those on welfare and took 22% of their income and said: "Now you go out and pay your rent. Now you go out and feed your children. Now you go out and buy food." And the response from the Minister of Community and Social Services was that he will prepare a menu for them, they should buy tuna, and they should have a different diet altogether. He wasn't having that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin):** There's too much noise, honestly. Too much noise. I can't hear. If you want to hold conversation, do it outside, please.

**Mr Curling:** And as the plot boiled, as the plot went on, as they cut 22% from the most vulnerable people, they went ahead again and cancelled all the non-profit housing that was being constructed for those who can't afford the market rents outside there. Immediately they went out there and they cancelled that. I'm sitting here wondering, why would they be doing that? Why would they be cutting 22% off the most vulnerable people in our society? Why would they in the meantime cancel all that non-profit housing that would provide decent affordable shelter for those people? The plot continues.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing announced that he's going to eliminate rent control in this province. So here it is: the individual, less money, and that individual consumer, after having less money, has no other place —

**Mr Ron Johnson (Brantford):** How did you vote on it?

**The Acting Speaker:** Order.

**Mr Curling:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. It's very difficult, I know, for them to listen to this. It's painful because I know, when they go home, there are people on welfare, there are people who need affordable housing, there are people who were expecting fair treatment of this government, a budget that would show that they are supportive of them, not a government that looks for the rich, not a government that would see that landlords who have the control of tenants would get more, or the bankers, or all those who are in a most comfortable position. It's very difficult for them to listen, and I understand that very much so.

This minister — to come back to the point — the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, when he arrived on this job he said, "You have a friend," to all the landlords and to the builders. "Now you have a true friend." All along he's only a friend of the landlords and the developers. The tenants were very scared. The seniors were scared. They were frightened because they saw now that they'll be pushed out of their homes.

The landlords told them, "If you get rid of rent control, we will build." That's what he was telling us. I checked with those landlords; I checked with those developers. You know what they told me? They will not build if you take off rent control. They said rent control is not the demon in all this problem of having affordable housing; that's not it at all.

Then here comes a by-election and the greed of power hung in the heart of those of the government and they changed their tune. They said, "We're going to have a tenant protection package." We said, "What's that?" "It's



a tenant protection package." We said, "No, you told those that you were going to cancel rent control." You said, "No, this is a tenant protection package." I watched them through the by-election. To buy votes, they promised to have a tenant protection package. People did not believe them. I just told you as I started that the people are much more powerful than you are, because that's where the power lies. They know what you've done to them. They know very much that you have conned them in this, telling them one thing and doing something else.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs announced his white paper. What did the white paper tell them? The white paper told them that if you ever move from your home, you will no longer have your home in that affordable manner in which you have it now. Once you vacate, the price of that vacant unit will go up. In other words, "I'm going to give to the landlords the right to raise that rent whatever price they want," because it will be no longer under rent control. So the individual who would like to move, because it's a free society, to move anywhere they want, to go to school where they want to, to work where they want, to go to church wherever they want, and decide that they will change that venue, is not able to do so because they have to consider now, "If I move from my environment, from my community, or choose another community, I will be penalized by a high rent that a landlord will be instituting on us by the power given to them by this Conservative government." So what they do is they may have to stay.

On the other hand, if the landlord chooses that he doesn't like this tenant and starts to put some harassment on this tenant in all kinds of creative ways and forces that individual out, what else can they do? They would have to go and are forced to pay more for their accommodation.

I think I will be out in that province and telling all those tenants: "Don't be fooled by this. Don't feel that this is the ultimate power of the government. You do have the power to tell this government to stop, that they are the one who's harassing." The government itself tells us that in its white paper it's going to have this harassment unit bureaucracy, this huge bureaucracy that will deal with any of those infractions.

Let me tell you about some harassment infractions and a bureaucracy that's been established to deal with that. It's called the Ontario Human Rights Commission. If you ever see that backlog in there, if you ever know the backlog that exists in there, you would not carry any of your cases there. I know people who have been there for five years waiting for their issue to be addressed. But this has not been so; they waited. So they're going to create this bureaucracy about the harassment and say, "If we do find someone harassing you, we'll charge that individual \$5,000 and we'll charge this other individual \$10,000 to \$50,000." But where is that poor tenant going to find anyone to go each day to put their case, to define what is harassment? I see a long lineup.

1110

The other issue I want to speak on is that same white paper that was presented said they're going to build a lot of affordable units. I'm trying to find a very parliamentary expression to use. I think it's hogwash. They will not

do so. They're trying to model their program on the BC model. In Vancouver it's there. There are almost no vacancies for apartments in Vancouver, yet they have not built any new units — not one new unit.

I can't understand this government, which is so vicious to the poor, which closes its eyes to the seniors. They are fearmongering to the poor seniors out there. Those who are comfortable in their environment are finding today that a government that should protect them is not doing so. Not only are they being attacked by high user fees on prescriptions and drugs and higher fees all around us, for using the parks and using the libraries and what have you, but now they're being attacked, they're coming right inside their homes, to invade them, to push them out, all for the price of a profit for the landlord.

I want very much to make the point that I'm not against landlords or developers. I'm not at all against the landlord or the developer, because I think we need them in our society. They can continue to build, and I'd encourage them to build, but I will tell you, they will never build for the lower-income people. I would say to them, "If you're not making a profit, don't build." Why should they be subsidizing the poor? They should not be subsidizing the poor. They are in this business to make a profit, and that's fair.

What we as a government should do is to make sure we regulate that industry properly, because we realize the free market system doesn't work in housing. It does not work at all in housing. If you don't believe me, you can look at 1975 when the same government understood it wasn't working and decided very much so to introduce legislation of rent control. That's why you did that. But you did it in a half-hearted way that made matters worse. If you're going to do something, do it all the way.

In 1985 another government came in and tried to introduce a wider process of rent control, and later on, in 1990, another government improved the conditions in some respect. And here comes 1996, and this Conservative government has decided they're going to sacrifice the poor, they're going to sacrifice those tenants who are having extreme difficulty in paying affordable rents, and pass their fate over to the developers and to the landlords, pitting one against the other.

The Conservative government has abdicated their responsibility to protect those in our society who are most vulnerable. It's evident in the way in which they have passed laws; it's evident in the dictatorial way in which they have practised their policies; it's evident when they eliminate employment equity; it's evident in whom they have targeted.

I am so happy, so glad that I am in a democratic process, that I can see the back of you all a couple of years from now, because the people will have spoken, the people who have been subjected to the abuse and the bullying by you, by the Premier and his government. The people will not forget. They will not forget when they find themselves living in worse conditions, when they find themselves not able to get jobs because they are being discriminated against and there are no laws to protect them, when they find that budgets have been cut in the Ontario Human Rights Commission in order to



carry out their work efficiently, because they do not care about those who are vulnerable in our society.

I say to the people outside, don't give up, don't give up any hope on this, because we know that things will get better as soon as we see the back of this Conservative government which has so viciously attacked the poor in our society.

We'll be happy when our kids — mind you, some of them will be in pain. There will be pain in their hearts when they realize that the tuition fees for their children have gone up almost beyond the reach at which they can educate their children. Today we need more education in order to access jobs. But what they have done is increase tuition fees. They've increased the rents for students. Every September — and I have spent a lot of time in the education system helping students get accommodation — they are seeking accommodation. I tell you that not only their tuition fees went up, not only user fees for every other thing within that system, but also rents for students will play an adverse effect on those who would like to access higher education and training. This government doesn't care. They hope that the rich, who are able to send their kids somewhere else or to private school, are better off and they don't have to worry.

They have made some tax cuts that we talked about. One person in my riding of Scarborough North said to me, "Will I be getting a tax rebate?" I said, "How much do you earn?" They said, "I get about \$22,000 a year." I said: "No, you'll be paying for the rich, those who can more afford it. You will not get a tax rebate because it's not for you, you see. It's for those at the top end of the scale."

People out there waiting are those who may get \$200, and then this government tells them that they go and pay it down on a house or buy some furniture to stimulate the economy. You know what they're going to do with that, Mr Speaker? They will pay the debts they have on their Visa because the other capitalists are all waiting there for it. The bankers are saying: "Your Visa is due. Give me that money."

It didn't go anywhere. Where did it go? Where did it improve the economy? It has in no way improved that person's life because it may have given them a bit to pay down, \$200 or so, on the debt they have, but not to buy furniture, run out and take a trip, as the Premier said, and go to a ski resort, hoping that will stimulate the economy so jobs are given in tourism. No, that's not the way it's going to happen. This government has brutally and viciously attacked the poor. They have done it in such a vicious way that they will not forget. That day of reckoning will come when they will vote this Conservative government out.

On my last point, just quickly, some of my constituents asked me to give some awards out here and I think it's appropriate. In giving some of these awards, I want to read this. This one is for Steve Gilchrist. It says the Most Talkative Politician Award. This award goes to the politician who speaks the most and says nothing.

Another award that is given, and I thought it was a wonderful award, is the Mismanagement Award, to Al Leach. This award is for your mismanagement of the TTC and now the destruction of tenant affairs. That's

another award they have asked me to give. They also gave me an award, and I won't bother to read that award here.

1120

I want to read another award, the Hot Water Award to David Tsubouchi. This award is for the man who ends up in hot water the most: welfare cuts, dented tuna, shopping list and cutting 100K off welfare etc.

This is what people out there who have more power than you, who vote, are thinking. They are very discouraged. I said, "Have faith," because in the next three weeks, when you take that white paper on the road, that discussion paper about eliminating rent control, you will be hearing from them.

I am extremely discouraged about this budget. I'll be voting against it because I don't think it does anything for the poor or for the disabled. It doesn't do anything for the man who froze on the street, and they could not even recognize him because he was frozen with his hands over his face, frozen because he had no home and because this government does not care. Any government that does not care deserves to be voted out.

**Mr Bernard Grandmaître (Ottawa East):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I think my friend failed to announce another award: Most Considerate Member of Parliament, Alvin Curling.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please. Questions and comments?

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** I stand to endorse Mr Curling's ringing condemnation of the free market system and its inability to provide housing in a fair and equitable way along with a whole lot of other products and services. Here we are on the last day of this House sitting in this session, the last day for this group of pages here, as fine a group of pages as has ever served this Legislative Assembly. They should be awfully proud of themselves, because I know their families and their communities are proud of them and so are all of us, but they've been witnesses to some of the cruellest attacks on the weakest and most vulnerable in our society by this government, by the Harris Tory government.

Who pays for the tax break for the very rich? Those 22 women and men downstairs in our cafeteria and our foodservices are paying the price. While these fat-cat Tories come back here, where they continue to get their \$80,000-plus a year salary, Monday, for those 22 women and men downstairs in the cafeteria and dining room, there is no place to go to work; there's no paycheque.

Here we are, I've got around 11:20 on Thursday at Queen's Park, and the foodservices are going to start in just a few minutes down there. I ask the public who are watching right now to come on down to Queen's Park today. Come down to the cafeteria, come down to the dining room and take a look at the faces of the victims of Mike Harris and share some of their despair and tragedy. Understand the price they're paying for Mike Harris's revolution. Understand the price those workers are paying for Mike Harris's fidelity and his obedience, like a lap-dog, to the very rich and the powerful in this province. Come down to Queen's Park and watch blue-suited, fat-cat Tories chow down after they've condemned those workers to destitution.



**Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence):** I just want to congratulate my colleague the member for Scarborough North on his most eloquent and passionate speech. There are few members who can address the House in as passionate a fashion as can the member for Scarborough North. As always he demonstrates an ability to reach beyond what is seemingly debate in this House, reach beyond this assembly to the real people out there who are concerned about what this government is doing with their lives, who are concerned in community after community, as was pointed out by my colleague, about the consequences of total neglect in some cases by this government of those people who are going to suffer the consequences and the wrath of this government, the wrath of this budget, totally neglecting the difficulties and suffering that will take place in community after community across this province.

My colleague's remarks pointed towards the back benches of this government are called for because it is that back bench which at the end of the day can make a difference. If they were to be real members of provincial Parliament, members of this Legislature and interested in what would happen in all those communities beyond their own partisan considerations, beyond their considerations for what's going to happen in the pecking order, who's going to be in a cabinet position, who's not and who's going to get a parliamentary assistant's position and who's not, who's going to sit on which committee and who's not — forget about all that. You're here to consider the concerns of all your constituents, regardless of their partisanship, regardless of your partisanship.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** I will have an opportunity to speak to the third reading of this bill, so I just want to respond very briefly to the member's comments and particularly on the awards he read out from the Lawrence Ave East Tenants' Association. I think it was an award for the worst management or the greatest mismanagement that went to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and the award for the minister who was in the most hot water went to the Minister of Community and Social Services.

The member very modestly didn't read out the award that went to him as the most considerate member of the Legislature, and he very nicely sent down one that actually came to me. I'm very appreciative of this. It was Member of Parliament Petition Award to Frances Lankin: "This award goes to a member of Parliament, a person who has given in the most petitions for all Ontarians, such as Bill 26, housing" etc. I'm quite impressed to have received this award. I think the member for St Catharines might want to contest the accuracy and the fact of whether or not I have put in the most petitions. I know he's at it every day, so he might want to contest that.

I want to say to the folks from the Lawrence Ave East Tenants' Association, Veronica Hering, who is the chairperson, Ruth Lunel, who is a fearless advocate on behalf of seniors, whom I've known and worked with over a number of years, that I appreciate their taking the time to observe what goes on here, to comment, to provide their feedback and particularly the kind of work they've done on issues like housing, like Bill 26, like standing up for seniors in Ontario. It's that kind of

participation in the democratic process that keeps all of us in this House accountable. It's that kind of response from the public that I hope in the long run will bring about a change in direction on the part of this government, a realization that they're not acting in the best interests of all Ontarians.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further questions or comments? If not, the member for Scarborough North has two minutes.

**Mr Curling:** I just want to thank the members who have commented on my speech. I appreciate it very much.

I also want to read one last part, just to round off these awards: "Most Inconsiderate Politician to Mike Harris. This award is for your total disregard for the poor, disabled and especially the seniors." That says it all, in the sense that the people out there are frustrated. These people are so frustrated, as I meet with them each day, even up to last night in the riding of my good friend the member for Yorkview, where over 50 or 60 tenants came together to express their fear about the fearmongering that goes on in this government, that they feel they must react and stand up for their rights. I encourage them to continue the fight. They should not be fearful of any ministers of this government who seem so mighty and powerful that they're beyond democracy.

I never had an opportunity in that Bill 26 demonstration, but I want to thank many, as a matter of fact most, and all the members of the opposition who stood up to this arrogant government's ramming this bill through. I say to them that it encourages me to know that there are people who believe in democracy and see that it must carry through regardless of the dictatorial way of this government.

Over the next year people will be coming before legislative committees to express their concern, and it will be heard. I will make sure it is heard.

1130

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Ms Lankin:** I'm glad to have an opportunity to speak on third reading of this very important bill, this tax bill, this bill that comes directly out of the finance minister's budget. It's not with pleasure that I take part in this debate because I'm concerned. I'm very concerned about the direction this government has set out in its Common Sense Revolution and as it follows through on that. I'm concerned about the impact on people in the province.

The centrepiece of this government's budget, of this government's commitment to the public of Ontario really was that 30% tax break. Give credit where credit's due: At least that's one promise they're living up to. But I can tell you that this is a promise that is very dangerous, not just to the economy of this province, not just to the government's fiscal situation, not just to the ability for government to continue to deliver important services, but to the lives of people.

I really hope over the break of the Legislature over the next few months Conservative MPPs go home to their ridings and meet with people in their ridings who are starting to feel the very direct result of this government's policy.



It won't be people who will come in and say: "Thank you very much. I now have a job I never would have had."

It won't be people who will come into your office and say: "Thank you very much. I now have this wonderful tax break I can go out and spend on all of these things I've always wanted to have or pay down my debt or do whatever I choose to do with this money."

It won't be from people who'll say: "Thank you very much. You've made me feel secure in my future in terms of my rental housing situation."

It won't be from people who say: "Thank you very much. I feel my health care system is going to be preserved and that medicare will survive these very difficult challenges that governments face in dealing with fiscal situations."

It won't be from parents who will come in and say: "Thank you very much. I know my kids are going to start to get a better quality education. I know class sizes are going to be controlled. I know the resources are going to be there when they need them. I know the supports in the school are going to be there when they need them. I know my child's teachers are getting the backing they need to be able to do the very best job possible."

It won't be from seniors who are going to come in and say to you: "Yeah, I can afford the user fees you've put on drugs. This is not a problem. I'm going to be able to maintain the pharmacological treatment that's been keeping me out of hospital, out of institutions."

Those are not the sorts of things you're going to hear. People are not going to thank you for that. And all of this because you're so committed to this 30% tax break, which costs the government \$20 billion in a combination of lost revenue and money you've got to go out and borrow. I genuinely thought Conservatives prided themselves on some sort of fiscal common sense. How can it be common sense to have to go out and borrow and pay interest on the money you've borrowed to give a tax cut in the order of \$20 billion over the next number of years that in fact goes to the wealthiest people in this province?

This is what is just so inane about the approach you are taking. Middle-income earners, working families, who are going to get back a couple of hundred dollars out of this tax break aren't going to see it, because you know the cuts you've made to municipalities mean that municipality after municipality is taking decisions either to increase their property taxes or to impose user fees for picking up garbage, for kids going to the skating rinks, for seniors having aquafit programs in the local pool, things the municipality used to be able to provide without additional fees out of their property tax base.

Because you've cut back on the transfers for municipalities, they're raising property taxes and they're imposing user fees on the citizens of their municipality, and working families are not going to see a penny of that great, wonderful, Tory promise of the provincial income tax cut.

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** Yes, they will.

**Ms Lankin:** You know who will. Of course you do: the wealthiest in this province.

**Mr Baird:** You will.

**Ms Lankin:** One of the members across, the member for Nepean, says I will. Well, you know what, sir? In this province of Ontario, members of the provincial Legislature in fact are among some of the wealthiest. The salaries we get are pretty damn good salaries and I don't need that tax break. Do you know what I need? For my community to be safe and healthy, I need a health care system, I need a good education system, I need roads I can count on that do not have potholes, I need a transportation system like our TTC. Those are the things that make my community healthy, that make my community a safe and wonderful place to live.

Those are the things you are just ripping out of Ontario and we are going to suffer the consequences of that in the deterioration of the network of support, of the networks that pull us together in our communities, of the networks that provide the quality of life that we have and enjoy — have had and did enjoy — in the province of Ontario.

There are many ills I could speak of when I look at the agenda as it has been unfolding over the last few months under this government. Every time I look at this, I say: "Why? Why are they doing this?" There are one or two answers only: either it's a move that benefits your friends — I'll talk about rent controls and some other examples of that; privatization benefits the private sector — or it's a move you have to make to pay for this inane, stupid tax cut you're proceeding with. Why would you force on Ontario an additional \$20 billion of debt over the next four to five years to pay for this tax cut, and also, to deal with the government's fiscal situation, have to cut that much more out of services? This does not make sense.

This is not about deficit reduction; this is about smoke and mirrors which allow you to go out with the excuse of the deficit and say: "Gosh, we've got to downsize government. Gosh, we've got to pull government out of the way. Gosh, get government out of your face and let the markets take over." The markets, my friends, don't share my values. My values are values that put people first. My values are values that say families need to have the support in their communities to provide for their kids, to make sure their kids are nourished, that they're well fed, that they're healthy, that they don't go to school hungry like we see more and more in this province, that those kids have got a good opportunity for the future, a good education system that's going to provide them the basis to learn and to be able to go on and develop a career, that there will be a possibility for a job.

My parents worked really hard. They understood the work ethic. They worked really hard, and one of the reasons they did it is because they wanted my brother and I to have a better shot in this world than they did. They wanted me to be able to go to school, to be able to go to university, to be able to get an education, to have dreams about a career, to be able to pursue a career in a field of my choosing. They worked hard and invested hard in my future, and of course left it up to me to do the best I could with those opportunities. But they believed they could create that opportunity. And we lived in a province that said: "Yes, you can. You can do that for your kids."

That's not how parents feel today. That is not what parents — working families — believe today. They don't



believe they can provide better for their kids. It's killing parents to think about their kids not having the same breaks they did, not having the same opportunity.

I must talk for a moment about the youth who are coming out of school right now and the bleak sense of despair so many of them feel. I came out of school with a sense of optimism, a sense of confidence, a belief that I would have a job — a belief, a full expectation. I never doubted it for a minute. I never worried about the possibility of having a job, of having a career I could build. Not for one moment did I worry about that. You talk to youth today who are coming out of school. You ask them how they feel about their futures. You ask them if they think they're going to have a job and a career. Let me tell you, the bleak sense of despair, as I said, the lack of optimism and of confidence is a frightening thing to confront sitting and talking to young people who don't know what the future will hold for them.

1140

There's a growing part of the population for whom this is true, and I say this to politicians of all political parties, how we must strive to become more relevant to the real lives of people. There's about 30% of the population out there, working adult population, who may find work but who are not likely to find a job in the traditional sense of a job with security and benefits and the things that I at least took for granted and expected would be part of my life. Those are people who are working part-time, who are working on contract, who are working on fee for service, who are working seasonally, who are working in the grey market. They're not attached to the workforce in the same way that we expected most people would be.

When we talk to them about regulation and red tape and the sorts of things that we hear from this government are going to make the world so much better, when we talk to them about employment standards and those sorts of things, what does this mean to those people? Very little. Politicians and governments are becoming irrelevant to their lives.

We must find a way to speak out — first of all, to listen — but to speak out to the issues that affect people's real lives and to provide a sense of possibility, of hope, of vision in their lives, to create a situation where we, as elected representatives on behalf of our constituents, are here actually debating a vision of community, of the society that we want to live in, and then talking about what are the right steps to take to actually achieve that. Not the other way around. Not the way I have heard for months from this Conservative government. Not the: "Get government out of the way, get elected representatives out of the way, there is no role, let markets take over. Somehow all the good economic stimulus that will come with this will trickle down and everyone will benefit."

Just think for a moment of some words from south of the border, some words from Ted Kennedy actually, in response to that old saying about a rising tide lifts all boats. As he pointed out, it seems like the yachts, in fact, are being lifted, but the skiffs and the rowboats and others are slowly sinking.

The polarization that is taking place in our North American society, but very, very certainly here in our

Ontario society, is one which leads to a decay of the social fabric. It's one that leads to the world of the haves and the have-nots. It's one that leads to social discontent, families in poverty, in desperation, seeking alternatives to the desperation of their lives. It's one that leads to inner cities that are reminiscent of Detroit and New York and many other large US cities, not our Canadian experience. It's one that leads to what we see more and more: homeless people, people living on the streets.

A couple of months ago I attended a fund-raising dinner and it was for a very important environmental cause and I was invited as a guest of a prominent member of the business community to be at a table this person had purchased. I was proud and pleased to be there, I'm very supportive of this cause, and it took place in a lovely, old, posh club that has been around since virtually the time of Confederation.

**Hon William Saunderson (Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism):** Not the Albany Club?

**Ms Lankin:** It's down on Bay Street. I came out of that at the end of the evening and walked out the door and down the few steps to the sidewalk on Bay Street. Right outside this building there's a large grate. It was winter; it was cold. There were two men with sleeping bags on this grate. This is where they would spend the night. I was hailing a cab to come back up here to Queen's Park to get my car, and there were many other cars lined up, and the imagery — and I'm sorry, I don't mean to exploit this — was pretty powerful. There were BMWs and Mercedes and limousines lining up to pick people up coming out of this event, a very worthy event, and this is no comment on the people who were there or the worthy cause they were supporting.

But the contrast, I say to my colleagues in this House, the contrast was so startling and so upsetting, it was like being punched in the stomach. You come out and you see this in our city, more and more people who are homeless; as I said earlier, more and more kids who are going to school hungry. Well, we have a responsibility, colleagues in this House of all political parties. We have a responsibility to say "No. That is not our vision of the community. That is not the Ontario we want to live in, and we have a responsibility to work together to create something different."

I have to say to you yet again, a stupid tax cut which is giving most of the money to the people who already have in this society and causing you to cut services from those who have not does not contribute to my vision of Ontario, to my vision of the community that I want to live in.

Just look at some of the things you've done this week, because there are so many. That's one of the things I'm trying to debate or to talk about, this government's agenda. You have to have a shotgun, you have it cocked in all directions, because you got your fingers in all sorts of little parts of what goes on in our community. Things are changing so quickly and so dramatically, and the cumulative effect you have not thought about, and that's where the danger lies.

But let me just talk about this week. This week we see the introduction of the white paper talking about changes



to rent control, gutting rent control, destroying rent control. But rent control is the name of a process of a protective piece of legislation so let's not worry about the law, the name, the whatever. Let's talk about the people.

Let's talk about the seniors whom you are saying to, that they are now economic hostages in their apartments, because if they move, their rent control protection is gone. So, if a senior gets to the point where they need a little more help, the need to rely on their family a little bit more, but they still want to live independently, and they want to move from Peterborough, where they live, to Kingston, where their son or their daughter has relocated for business, for work, they want to move to be closer, gone is their rent protection. They're economic hostages. Think about this.

**Mr E.J. Douglas Rollins (Quinte):** They might even get cheaper rent.

**Ms Lankin:** Oh, the member says, "They may get cheaper rents." In a dream — in a dream. Mr Speaker, I know. You always remind me to keep my remarks directed to you. Mr Speaker, this kind of wish and hope does not comfort the senior who is in their home now protected by rent controls knowing what will happen with their rents.

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound):** Protected by Big Brother. More government control.

**Ms Lankin:** I'm just listening over here to the member who is saying, "Oh, yes, government should be Big Brother and control everything and protect everything."

**Mr Murdoch:** It shouldn't be. That is what you want.

**Ms Lankin:** You know what? When it comes to a senior who's living on a fixed income, I want my government to protect that senior.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please, the member for Grey-Owen Sound. There's a period afterwards where you can pass all your questions and all your comments. Wait for that period.

**Mr Murdoch:** Tell her to keep her finger to herself. Don't point your finger.

**Ms Lankin:** The member has counselled me not to point my finger. If he remains quiet and doesn't provoke me, I won't turn to him and point my finger. We have a deal. It's an easy deal to strike.

The point I'm making is, I want my government to play a role in protecting that senior. I want my government to work with the private sector to create employment opportunities, to create economic growth, but government's role is to curb the excesses of unbridled capitalism.

That's what these folks have forgotten. They're sort of saying, "Take the reins off." Government has a role to step in and provide that balance on behalf of people. I want the seniors who live in my riding and across this province to have a government that cares enough about them to protect them, to make sure they have a home and don't become part of the homeless. I care about that and you should too.

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I care about the students who have gone off to university or college and who come home to a home community in the summer and then go off again for a school

year. If they leave the apartment and come home for the summer or go to another community for a job, they've lost their rent control protection. Think about this. Think about the economic hostages you are creating in this province.

That was one thing that was done this week. What's another thing?

Within a couple of days we will see the legislation that was passed come to fruition and we will have user fees, new user fees on drugs for senior citizens in this province. The Minister of Health stands in his place and says: "Seniors are very supportive of this. Seniors know that in other provinces we have copayments." Is that the test? With the changes that are necessary in the health care system, with the changes that those who have a vision for health care reform believe in and argue for, which are the changes that take our system and spend more of our resources out of the institution and in the community, out of illness treatment and more on illness prevention, on health and wellness promotion, pharmacological treatment, prescription drug treatment is a very important part of quality health care nowadays.

It's taken on more of a role with the advances in science and the development of new products and new drugs that can treat conditions, that can keep people stable or help people become healthy without having to go for more intrusive types of treatment, surgery or into hospital. It's an important part of the shift of what has to happen in the health care system. We should be looking at other provinces moving to the Ontario situation where there is not a user fee, not the other way around.

This just speaks to your total lack of vision of what needs to happen in health care to preserve quality health care, to preserve medicare. If I sound passionate when I talk about medicare, any New Democrat would be. It's part of our heritage. We speak of medicare with burning, fierce pride. It doesn't mean we defend the status quo. It doesn't mean we don't believe there are changes and natural evolutions, and we're absolutely willing participants in seeing those changes brought forward.

But that's not what's happening here with this government. There isn't a vision for the protection of medicare. Of course not. Just look at Bill 26. Just look at all the changes which open the door for the Americanization and privatization of our Canadian health care system. Let me tell you that I and my colleagues will fight you every step of the way on that, because medicare is important. Medicare provides the best system we know anywhere in the world for people's health, for the quality of health. Just look at the population statistics in terms of our quality of health in this country. Look at all the measures. We will fight you and your destruction of this important national heritage of medicare. We know where you're headed, but we know you will meet great resistance along that path. That's another thing that's happening this week in Ontario.

Another really good example: With this government, bottom line means everything, privatization, giving over chunks of work to your friends in the private sector. Let's just talk about the 22 men and women who are out the door tomorrow from this building, who work here, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, in the food and bever-



age services. The public might not know a lot about that, but there is a dining room downstairs and there's a cafeteria downstairs. The men and the women who work there are waiters, waitresses, servers, cashiers, cooks, short-order cook, chef, people who work in the beverage services, people who do some of the minor catering work to some of the meetings that happen in the building.

These are folks who have worked here for a long time. The government comes in and says, "Oh, my gosh, there's a deficit problem here in that we don't take in as much money in the food and beverage services as we pay out in salaries, so we've got to solve this problem."

You know what? I can agree with you. Okay, let's solve the problem. What's the solution? You could put up the prices. Why should the taxpayers of Ontario subsidize the cost of your lunch or my lunch or any other member of provincial Parliament's lunch? So let's put up the prices. Why is that such a stupid response to this problem of a deficit in the food and beverage services? Why wasn't that a possible solution? Ideologically, of course, this is in the public sector, this must be bad, so therefore the only solution is to hand it off to your buddies in the private sector. So who's coming in? Marriott's coming in to run this.

How are they going to deal with this deficit problem? Well, two things to it —

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener):** How much was the staff making?

**Ms Lankin:** Mr Wettlaufer, I'm going to get to that, so you can wait for that point.

Marriott comes in. How do they solve this problem? They're going to do two —

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. The member for Beaches-Woodbine has the floor.

**Ms Lankin:** Marriott's going to come in and solve this problem in two ways. First of all, I predict that in fact the prices will go up anyway. Fine. So what else is going to be part of the solution, because it's not just breaking even that is their goal? Would a private sector business come here just to break even? Of course not. We know that as part of the business world, a very admirable motive in business, there is a profit to be made. Investments and return on investments are an important part of what goes on out there in the business world.

But my friends, how they're going to do that, how they're going to achieve that, is by dramatically slashing the wages and benefits and hours of workers, of servers, of cashiers. Think about the people we're talking about here.

Mr Wettlaufer said to tell the public how much these people made. Yes, you're right, about \$17 an hour these people made. Some of them, like Anna, after 18 years of work in this place and seniority, made \$17 an hour. I'm assuming the member wanted me to tell the public that because they should be outraged that someone as lowly as a waitress or who works behind a food counter could make that kind of money. How indignant we should all be on behalf of the taxpayers that there's a decent wage being paid to this woman who worked for 18 years, who is 57 years old and who is on her way out this door with an offer of one-year bridging to a pension at 60 so she

will have two years plus with no income, her husband on a disability pension; no way to support her and her husband through that. Where do you think she's going to get a job?

I hope people are indignant that she was getting that kind of money. I suspect people will feel a real sense of sympathy when they realize that she's not employable, has nowhere to go and is out the door so that your business friends, your buddies, can make a profit off this operation by screwing workers, because that's what it comes down to.

There's another woman who works down there, eight years' seniority. Her situation is she's going to go from \$16, \$17 an hour down to just over \$7 an hour — that's what's been offered — no benefits, and no guarantee of hours. Currently I think her situation is 35 hours a week, 35 or 37 regularly — no guarantee of hours. How does she make this decision about her child in child care, to pay for the child care, when she's got no guarantee she's going to be able to pay for it out of her paycheque because there no guarantee of hours? What are you doing to her? Forcing her into a situation without work, where she has to keep her child at home and an inability to put a child in child care, and perhaps ending up on social assistance. Does this make sense?

These are 22 people. I understand from the attitudes in this place and some of the things that I've heard, like, "Tell the people how outrageously much these people earned," that you don't care about the 22 people. Well, some of us do. Some of us know them personally and feel deep in our hearts their pain.

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**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek unanimous consent of the House that we continue to meet from 12 to 1 o'clock for the purpose of continuing consideration of government business and that at 1:30 we proceed to consideration of routine proceedings as prescribed in the order of the House, June 26.

**The Acting Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

**Ms Lankin:** The point is not just that some of us care about these 22 people, because we do, but that this is such an illustrative example of this government's approach to the people of Ontario, its cavalier approach of dividing people into the haves and have-nots, of dehumanizing anyone who has a legitimate complaint about this government. Just the example of saying, "Tell the public how much these workers were paid." It's the workers' fault? Come on.

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** How long are you going to speak?

**Ms Lankin:** Not long. There's a question about how much longer I'm going to speak. Probably a few more minutes — it won't be long — just to facilitate the members in terms of their participation so that they know.

I think often of the way in which this government plays the politics of blame and the politics of division. I think often of the way in which this government responds to anyone who has a criticism of it as a special-interest group. There are two moments in time that I think of.



One was before the Quebec referendum. Do you remember, on the Friday or the Saturday, the big demonstration that was held of people from all across Canada going to Montreal to talk about their support and their belief in the unity of our country and the importance of Quebec being part of our country? An outpouring of genuine emotion on the part of ordinary people being there. I remember the Premier of our province, having gone there with his son, who said — it wasn't a big fanfare or anything — "I'm here as an ordinary citizen to make my point of view known. There are 100,000 people here today and that's got to say something to the government of Canada and to the government of Quebec about the wishes and the desires of ordinary Canadians. What a proud moment."

A couple of months later in Hamilton, when he was sitting in his big, cushy hotel room at the Tory convention and 125,000 Ontarians were in the street ringing that hotel, calling on this government to wake up and to understand that the devastation it was bringing to this province was hurting real people, our Premier proudly stood and said, "Special-interest groups."

Oh, the double standards are amazing. The politics of blame, the politics of division are amazing. Once again, let me tell you that is not my vision of the community I want to live in, one where it is "us" and "them"; one where there are haves and have-nots; one where it's okay for a member of provincial Parliament, with disdain, to talk about ordinary working people behind a cash register or serving tables earning \$17 an hour. That's not my vision of my Ontario and I'm going to fight for my vision of my Ontario, as will many Ontarians, in response to the ongoing onslaught from this government of decisions which serve —

**Mr Wettlaufer:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The member for Beaches-Woodbine stated that the members of the government spoke with disdain. That's a question of motive, which is not allowed. We were not speaking with disdain on what the average worker —

**The Acting Speaker:** Take your seat. That's not a point of order.

**Ms Lankin:** Far be it for me to impute motive, so let me speak of my own motive. I speak with disdain for the comments that the member made. I speak with disdain for the direction of this government, which is hurting real people, people whom I represent in my constituency; families who don't know whether they're going to be able to keep a job; kids who don't know whether they're ever going to have a job; seniors who are going to feel like economic hostages in their apartments because if they move their rents will go up; youth who have invested energy and vigour and idealism into obtaining an education and who have no confidence or hope that they'll ever be able to use it or apply it to the development of a career in their lives.

I want a different kind of Ontario. I will fight for a different kind of Ontario. I believe the people of Ontario, as they start to feel, day after day, the effects of the decisions of this government, which are made every day on the basis of who benefits — when it's your friends who benefit, when it's the landlords who benefit, when it's the sharks on Bay Street who are circling around just

sniffing the blood money that will come from the privatization of so many public-owned assets, when they benefit, your decisions are clear. When it's a decision to cut to pay for this tax giveaway to the wealthiest in our province, your decisions are clear. We know whose side you're on, and the public will understand soon whose side you're on.

My friends, when it comes to being a representative of the people in your riding, at some point in time those people will demand of you that you bring to the debate, bring to the discussion, bring to the decisions of your government a sense of their interests, a sense that you're on their side. If you fail to do that, the consequences will be only too obvious at that time.

I appreciate having the opportunity to participate in the third reading debate on this important bill coming out of the finance minister's budget. It's clear that I and my colleagues are very concerned about the direction of the government. As we head into a period of reflection, when the Legislature is not sitting over the next couple of months, back into our constituencies, I hope the public will make clear to all of us in our riding offices their points of view so that it's not only members of the New Democratic Party and members of the official opposition who speak on behalf of those views, but perhaps some of the members of the Tory caucus will begin to bring those points of view back to the discussions in the government and we might see a different approach. One can always live in hope.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Baird:** The member for Beaches-Woodbine talks about the lack of hope and opportunity out there. That's exactly the message that those of us on this side of the House heard during the election campaign — that there was no hope and no opportunity for a better future, particularly for young people in this province. That's why we know that if we continue to go down the same road we were going down we would get the same results. That's why the problems and challenges facing the province required a real change in direction, and that's the change the people of Ontario voted for. That's important to get on the record.

I am concerned with the member's discussion about how the tax cut will only affect the most wealthy in society. That's class warfare. We know that the tax cut to create jobs introduced by this government will benefit all income taxpayers in the province; it will benefit those families making \$30,000 and \$40,000 a year. That's good news, because with an increasing debt burden and declining income, they don't have the resources to raise their family they used to have.

The member talks about the lack of hope and opportunity among youth. That's something that's built up over recent years. It didn't stop them, when she was in government, from raising tuition for university students. They promised to eliminate tuition, and they raised it. With great respect, where was the hope and opportunity for young people then?

She talks about the reality of the restructuring going on here at Queen's Park with respect to foodservices. I don't think any one of us is pleased that this is going on. I don't think any one of us takes any pride in what's going



on. The reality is that we cannot spend \$800,000 as a subsidy for a restaurant, for a dining room.

**Ms Lankin:** So raise the price of your tuna sandwich.

**Mr Baird:** I went there for breakfast last week and paid \$9 for bacon and eggs. Regrettably, we can't afford that \$800,000 subsidy. But it's very important to put our motive. No one takes any pleasure in this. No one is happy about it. For the member to stand there and assume that this is somehow a joyful occasion is regrettable.

1210

**Mr Conway:** I want to commend the member for Beaches-Woodbine for her remarks this afternoon. I don't, obviously, agree with all that she said. She reminds us, however, that there are a lot of people in the community who are not sharing in the cornucopia of economic good news that seems to encourage the young Turks of the government bench. The previous speaker reminds me that so much of this is about faith and ideology, and I'm quite prepared to say let's give some benefit of the doubt.

Quite frankly, when I hear some of what I've heard in this place in the last six or eight months — and I understand what the voters were saying in Ontario a year ago — this "Let's just open the place for business; let's just settle some accounts," it reminds me of Grant Devine in Saskatchewan in 1982. The last time I checked, half that government was either under indictment or in jail. I know that's not going to happen in Ontario, but boy, does some of the speechmaking remind me of the kind of wonder that rigorous, right-wing conservatism was going to provide to the people of Saskatchewan under the Devine administration. Ten years later we have an opportunity to assess performance against promise. I don't know whether I'm the only one who notices how many in that government and caucus have gone to jail or are under indictment for some really interesting behaviour.

Much has been said here this morning about the situation downstairs in the dining room — Herr Wettlaufer was interjecting enthusiastically during Ms Lankin's speech — but I just make this point: 20 years ago, if I remember correctly, long before the socialist hordes ran the place or the Liberals were in charge, we were paying to a private operator something like three quarters of a million or a million dollars in subsidy. Mr Dineley comes to mind. What goes around, comes around, and I guess we're on that carousel again.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I enjoyed the member's speech very much. I was observing it in my office and then later on in here. It really makes me wonder how the New Democratic Party could have chosen anyone other than the member for Beaches-Woodbine for leader, because of the points that she made so eloquently and with so much conviction. I want to commend her on that. I think she outlined very well the general direction in which we're moving.

I wish I had an American flag with me today, as my friend the former member for Mississauga West used to have, because that is clearly the direction in which this government is moving, the American model, particularly some of the states that have widened the gap between those at the bottom rung and the top end of the economic

ladder. I find it unfortunate that this government is allowing it to move in that direction.

I don't know if the member had a chance to mention the need for the appropriate provincial funding for the environmental cleanup of Martindale Pond, because I know there was a time limitation, and the appropriate funding of —

**Ms Lankin:** For the MRI, the magnetic resonance imager, for St Catharines?

**Mr Bradley:** We have the MRI in St Catharines now. I've mentioned that many times.

**Ms Lankin:** Thanks to the work I did when I was minister.

**Mr Bradley:** Thanks to the member for Beaches-Woodbine, who gave that approval.

Subsequent to that, I was wondering whether the member will be commenting further on the need for funding for the 1999 World Rowing Championships to be held in St Catharines, which will generate all kinds of funds for the provincial government, funds which I hope they would apply eventually to assisting those who are most in need and who require the intervention of government, as opposed to those who certainly do not require that assistance from government.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further questions or comments? If not, the member for Beaches-Woodbine.

**Ms Lankin:** Let me say to the member for St Catharines that no, I didn't have a chance to mention those very important things, although when I did have an opportunity in government to serve in the portfolio of economic development and trade and work on community economic development initiatives, the beginning work on attracting the rowing championship was a very important project, along with enhancement of the rowing lanes in Welland. It's a very important tourist and economic stimulus project and I hope the government will look seriously at it, although I know they cancelled all of the community economic development program I put in place so I'm not sure whether you should hold out much hope for that.

**Mr Conway:** It would make a great movie: On Martindale Pond.

**Ms Lankin:** On Martindale Pond, right. In any event, let me say to the member for Nepean, you say you don't take any joy in 22 people going out the door from the foodservices. Fair enough. We have an opportunity this afternoon. The Legislative Assembly committee is now going to sit to hear from the Speaker and to hold the Speaker accountable for some of these decisions. Join with us then in asking for a review of the alternatives, the alternatives that were never seriously considered by the Board of Internal Economy because the direction had come from the front benches to the board members, from your caucus, with respect to what should happen, and that was the course of privatization.

Join with us this afternoon to search for an alternative and, most importantly, to ensure that for those people who are most harshly treated in this, the Annas and the other examples we've brought forward, there are some individual solutions that are found if you refuse to join with us in the support for overall review.



I just want to say, when it comes to youth and it comes to hope, I just saw a friend of mine, a young woman sitting here. She is our hope. Not our future; our present. I'm pleased she's been here to hear this today.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. Time has expired.

**Ms Lankin:** I appreciate the opportunity, Mr Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Cordiano:** I'm delighted to speak on Bill 47, the budget bill, and I'm delighted to comment on this government's outlook and vision for Ontario because this budget in effect determines where we're going for the years to come before us. This one budget, the first budget this government has brought down, will cement the fate of this government and set a course for all Ontarians which I think will be difficult to deal with in the years to come down the road.

For those of us who do not agree with the budgetary measures that are outlined, those of us who strongly feel that this budget will set a course that will be destructive, that will be very painful for the people of this province, we lament the fact that this government has taken these initiatives.

Let me deal with some of the myths contained in this budget, because I think there are many. One of the myths is essentially that this budget, through its tax-cutting measure, the income tax reduction that has been proposed by this government, will result in real net job creation amounting to 725,000 new jobs for Ontario.

Well, if we look at the government's own projections contained in the budget, this fiscal year, 1995-96, the unemployment rate will go up as a result of the introduction of this budget. If you further factor in the projections made by this government contained in its own forecasts in the budget, there will not be the kind of job creation that this government stated would be the case in the Common Sense Revolution document that was put forward in the last election campaign.

I do not believe this government was being straightforward and coming clean with respect to its job creation numbers when it stated so in the budget and, prior to that, in the election campaign. We know that's going to be one of the first promises that will not be kept. We can't see that today, but I think in three years' time it will become evident that this government is bankrupt of ideas when it comes to ensuring that job creation is taking place. They will simply rely on what will happen out there in the private sector; that is to say that suddenly there will be a tremendous influx of investment, suddenly there will be a tremendous increase in job creation, when the opposite is taking place. A number of jobs are disappearing out there in the corporate sector. Every day we hear an announcement whereby jobs are being lost.

Yes, there is some job creation going on. I read today in one of the clippings that 200,000 new jobs were created across the country this year and that only 48,000 of these were created in Ontario. Now that's an interesting figure because, as everyone knows, Ontario accounts for almost 40% of the GNP of this country, yet when you look at those 48,000 new jobs that are being created in Ontario compared to the 200,000 across the country, that's less than 25%. That's approaching somewhere between 20% and 25%.

1220

We are certainly not getting the kind of job creation numbers we should be getting in this province of ours to keep up with the number of new entrants into the labour force. In fact, the number of people who are still unemployed in this province approaches half a million. Let's not mention the fact that there are half a million others on social assistance who are able-bodied adults who could be working. Together, that is one million people who could be working in this province and do not have the opportunity to do so because there are not the jobs.

That is one of the first myths created by this government in its budgetary policy and its proclamations through its budgetary statements.

The second myth has to do with the fact that the consumer will benefit, the mythical one taxpayer will see an increase in purchasing power as a result of this government's budgetary measures. The income tax cut which was put in place through the budget will kick in at some point during the summer, and then following that there will be additional cuts made. If we examine the logic of what the government is saying with respect to its tax-cutting stimulus program, follow it through, on the one hand you have income tax cuts which are designed to put more money in the pockets of consumers so that in effect consumers will go out and spend, thus creating jobs in Ontario.

One wonders where those consumers will spend their money and if it will be on goods that are made in Ontario. We know there are many goods that come into Ontario from all over the world. Furthermore, those same people could pay down their mortgages, which is a good thing because it's adding to savings, but it does not stimulate the consumer-driven economy, which this government was banking on to create jobs. Furthermore, those same consumers could purchase a vacation in Florida, and that money leaves the country with no net impact in Ontario in terms of job creation.

Even if you concede that to the government, following through with their logic that you cut income taxes to individuals so that they can have more purchasing power, follow that through, but then how do you explain that on the other hand you're imposing, as a result of all the cutbacks that have been undertaken by this government, additional user fees? What do those user fees represent to that one mythical taxpayer? Well, add it together. You're not going to have any additional purchasing power on the part of that one taxpayer because those user fees eat away at any savings that might have accrued to that person by way of an income tax cut.

What you're left with is really no stimulus. Even following the logic of this government's plan, that mythical one taxpayer does not even get the benefit of that tax cut in the end, because the very purchasing power that this government likes to speak about going up will not be there, in effect because it will be taken away by user fees. What kind of user fees? All kinds: property tax increases, increases that will be imposed by municipalities for recreational services, other types of municipal services, other types of provincial services. There is a plethora of additional user fees that will be imposed on the one mythical taxpayer. So, following through on the



logic, the government defeats itself with an illogical plan that on the one hand talks about having consumer purchasing power going up and on the other strips away that very consumer purchasing power that was supposed to create the jobs. So you have these myths contained within the budget.

I thought about this budget and the direction that this government is taking us in and the vision set forward by this government, and it goes well beyond that. The vision that this government has laid before the people of this province and the undertakings of this government will lead to the kind of society which ultimately we won't be able to recognize once this government gets through. It will be a pale version of what Ontario was throughout its glorious past and history.

When I think of this great province, the thing that comes to my mind are its people, the people around this province. I've been travelling this province for a number of years now, and more recently in the last number of months I have visited many communities across the province. What I've understood about the strength of this province are its people, their dedication, their commitment, their perseverance, their spirit, and this government is violating that very spirit, that very essence of what made Ontario great.

There is no consideration for people, as befits any government in this province, to undertake a commitment to ensure that we view people in this province as the assets of our economy, of our society, not its liabilities, and that's precisely what this government has done with those one million people who are sitting on the sidelines, who are unemployed or on social assistance. They have basically discounted those people as liabilities to all of us, and you cannot have that in a society that is successful. The most successful jurisdictions in the future will be those that invest in their people and those that make those people who are not now productive more productive in the future because we cannot sustain this kind of society, a society which is bent on having two types of lives, two types of worlds: one world, one society where people are well-off, well-educated, highly trained and earning the kind of dollars that most people could only dream of. That's a minority. And all the while there are many, many — too many — people who are unskilled, untrained, uneducated, lagging far behind.

That is the circumstance we face in our province and it is a malady that is inflicted upon many societies today in the industrialized world. I understand that. But the solutions being proposed by this government, the new directions, the vision that has been set forward by this government, is the wrong course of action to take. It will propel this province further and further behind. It will not take us forward into the future, will not allow this province its true destiny, will not allow us to move boldly into the future to realize a future that is full of potential and far greater than what it is today. This government is shortchanging the people of this province as a result.

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I started to think about what is the true description of this budget and what is the true image that comes to mind when this government puts forward this vision in its

budgetary policy. How does the government view Ontario? I started to think about it, and what I came up with is this: This government views an Ontario where there's no room for exceptions, there's no room for people who don't fit in. It's almost an idyllic kind of outlook that this government has of a world that no longer exists, of a province that no longer exists, of a province that harkens back to an era when people lived in a single-family dwelling, there were two cars in the garage, women stayed home, looked after their children, were by and large housekeepers, didn't work, and husbands went off and earned a living. They were the sole breadwinners.

Those are the policies that this points to as put forward by this government. It's almost an imaginary world. It's almost like looking at a bunch of plastic dolls and this government's saying, "This is what we want." I have two young children, two daughters. What do they play with? They play with Barbie dolls. This government looks upon this province almost in the way that those children look upon their dolls — they're playthings. They've imagined a province, a society, where everyone perfectly fits into these slots, where it's an imaginary world. That's the only way you can describe it because there are no exceptions for people who can't fit in, through no fault of their own.

Let me give you an example of what I mean. I raised in this House the issue around a constituent of mine, a Mr Jim Wade, who is a disabled person who had been working for this provincial government of ours for the last 22 years. He had been given that opportunity by the Progressive Conservative government of Bill Davis through a vocational rehabilitation program. I take this as an example of what this government is doing to many, many people across this province. They've simply said, "Well, Mr Wade, you no longer fit in." "How so?" Mr Wade asked. "I had done my work diligently; I had all kinds of good performance records. How can you tell me I don't fit in? I've been a very productive member of the Ontario civil service and now you're telling me I don't belong, there's no room for me here."

That's not acceptable. It's not acceptable to me, it's not acceptable to the members of my party, I'm sure, and I hope that it is not acceptable to members of the government. I can only hope that. I don't see any evidence that that will change.

I say to the members opposite, you are sacrificing too many people, and I give you that as an example: Mr Jim Wade, who now is forced into a situation where he and his family may be on social assistance, welfare. They're being forced on to the welfare rolls because Mr Wade no longer has the option of going to work and continuing to sustain his family. I cannot see how that makes common sense. I just cannot see how taking a productive member of our society, throwing him out of work and now forcing him and his family on to social assistance — I just do not understand how there could be any common sense in that. What's the logic in that? I don't see it.

So looking at what this government has proposed, its view of the world — again, going back to the Barbie dolls, a perfect image of who they're speaking to. This is their core vote. This is the kind of person: idyllic setting



in Ontario, a suburban kind of setting where people are living in homes which are quite nice, where people are doing reasonably well; they're employed. That's fine, that's your core vote, but those same people could be next to lose their jobs and suddenly that idyllic state no longer exists. We're all vulnerable regardless of where we live, and our circumstances in most cases are very temporary.

We're all dependent on each other, and that's what this government has failed to realize, that each and every one of us is vulnerable and dependent in more ways than we realize on each other and that the strength we all have comes from depending on each other. This government has failed to recognize the basic tenet that a truly successful, truly civil and truly powerful society can have. The power comes from understanding that. We are powerless if we fail to understand that. We simply will be a lot less than we could be in this government's vision of the future.

I find that disturbing because we are giving up our true potential. We are not moving forward to grab hold of what our true destiny ought to be in this province. We could be so much more than we are and than we should be. This government is reducing what we are doing to its minimalist state and says, "We are going to become a lot less than what we are," first by dismantling government operations and second by moving forward with its agenda to make all its efforts come to a lot less. The government no longer represents the entity it used to, the positive force it can be in bringing forward the good things we've seen in our society.

Yes, we've gone through difficulties; yes, we have deficits we must deal with, but there's another myth about this government. It had claimed: "We must do this. We must cut severely. We must cut back on everything we do because we have a very serious deficit problem." That's fine and good, but there's no evidence contained in this budget that an urgency exists within these budgetary measures, because ultimately, to accommodate the \$5 billion in a tax cut, this government has to borrow an additional \$20 billion so that the accumulated debt of this province by the end of this government's mandate will have increased by \$20 billion simply as a result of accommodating that tax cut. I find that unacceptable, and this government is perpetrating a myth about the urgency with which it wants to fight the deficit problem in this province.

One looks at the budget and asks, what is contained in this budget that is a true measure that will take us forward? I point out again that there is no principle underlying this budget which puts the interests of people at the forefront: a government that understands that to succeed economically in the future we have to invest in our people.

There's but one mention of training in the entire budget speech, very little reference to any kind of training initiatives. We don't want the kinds of initiatives we used to have that were highly bureaucratic. There are problems, to be sure, but there's nothing innovative contained in this budget with respect to training. There's no recognition of the fact that in the future training and education will be the cornerstone, the hallmark of truly

successful economies around the world and that investing in our people is the best thing we could do, not only socially but economically. This government fails to realize that, and it is a true indictment of this government, its bankruptcy of ideas with respect to what's really necessary.

1240

This government has moved to dismantle the operations of government. Time and again we saw announcements during the last number of months which would see the reduction of government in its importance and size. No one is saying we shouldn't have reductions in the government's operations in terms of making things much more efficient, but there is a way to go about doing this. There's a way that would speak to the need to restructure in an efficient manner.

This government has taken a cut and said, "We're going to do it right across the board," with no prioritizing of what's important, no understanding, no direction about what is truly essential within the operations of government, what is truly essential about moving forward in our society and taking the economy forward. Ultimately, this government is forsaking the very idea that government has a positive role to play in the economy.

Government can play a role that enhances and facilitates the private sector. That's what Ontario has always been about. Enlightened governments have always played a role in our economy, enhancing and facilitating and making possible the kind of standard of living that we have in this province. Successive governments, government after government, understood that the true role of the province was to enhance and facilitate the engine of growth, the private sector.

The industrial infrastructure that was built in this province was second to none after the Second World War. And they were good Tory administrations that understood this, Progressive Conservative governments, right up until Bill Davis's time. This government has forsaken that tradition, that history, has forsaken it for all time and is moving forward with the kind of vision that will reject history, reject our past, and take us into the unknown abyss, to my way of thinking, the unknown, a place that's dark and fearful and filled with anxiety and uncertainty for many people across this province.

I've talked to many people across this province, students who've said, "Why should I continue with my education?" They're doubting their future. "There isn't going to be a job when I graduate," and there's a government that simply doesn't understand this. I've talked to seniors who've paid for benefits all their lives only to see them eroded and in some cases taken away entirely now. I've talked to people aged 50-plus who have lost their jobs and have been told: "Don't bother re-entering the workforce. You're simply too old. You're not going to get another job." There are hardworking people, as I said earlier, who have jobs and fear they may be the next to lose their jobs, their benefits and their family security.

All this uncertainty is taking too great a toll on the people of this province, and you have a government that foments that uncertainty and that anxiety by pitting one group against another and by forsaking the one million people in this province who are not working and are not



contributing and not participating in a future that's more promising for them.

That's unacceptable, and this government has to do a lot of rethinking. Give up this brutal notion of the world that's being put forward by this government. Give up that vision, and start to realize that we can all be better, that we can be a much better society, a much more efficient economy, if we work together, if we invest in people, if we begin to realize that our true potential lies in investing in people and viewing them as the assets of our economy and our society and not as liabilities. Therefore, I cannot support the government in any of its budgetary measures, because they have failed to realize that fundamental aspect of what makes our society what it is, what it was, and they've forsaken the future for all of us, for all those students out there, for all those young people and for all those people who are not participating, who do not have the same opportunities. They have forsaken the future. They have sold the future away for those people, and I oppose what this government is doing in every way possible.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments? If not, further debate.

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** I am happy to speak today to the budget bill and, more specifically, to give examples to the people at home where I come from of what the kind of budget that was brought down by government means to people in Windsor-Sandwich. There has been a number of issues, particularly related to health and education, that are a direct result of and will continue to be the outcome of the kind of budget the provincial government, the Conservatives, insist on bringing down.

The government has always said, even while it was campaigning, that they would never cut health care. We've always begged to differ, and now we have proof that in fact that's what they have been doing. There have been many examples, especially recently, about the outcomes of the cuts, in particular those to health care.

To start with, the government is going to have to meet its financial targets, and the only way it can do that is if it finds ways and means to cut, and they have been doing that. In some areas, many people in my community would agree, it was probably a long time coming that we should look at some areas where government has likely gotten carried away over the last several decades, and it's always time to revisit archaic rules, archaic bureaucracy, look at agencies and make them work better, look at agencies whose time really has come and maybe should pass on.

Specifically, the government was elected on a couple of premises, and people felt secure, while they were elected in a majority government, that their health care would be secure, that education for children would be secure.

With the budget the government is bringing forward, neither of those two things is true. In the area of health, particularly in an area like Windsor-Essex county where we have seen significant changes in our community with the amalgamation of four hospitals into two and massive layoffs, particularly at the nursing level, the people in my

community are asking, if we haven't had cuts to health care, why are these nurses being laid off? Why are people being forced out after having been there for so many years? Why are there changes in the dialysis unit where people are receiving treatment, where they're moving full-time staff and bringing in part-time staff? Our dialysis patients in Windsor are worried that as they bring in new nursing people without the experience at first, they are not knowing how to deal with those huge needles dialysis patients need to deal with.

When the government first started in their first year, they cut \$1.3 billion from hospitals, yet they continue to say they didn't cut health care. In my community, they made huge health care cuts, particularly to our hospitals. Hospitals across Ontario, many of whom I've spoken to, simply cannot take the 18% cuts across the board.

The government must have seen that indeed they had perhaps gone too far in some instances, and they released a paper, A Fund to Aid Hospitals in High-Growth Areas. After their significant cut of \$1.3 billion, they reinvested a mere \$25 million to those high-growth areas, and they'll continue to talk about the reinvestment of health dollars. I will tell you, with the significant cuts in the billions of dollars, the sprinkling of reinvestment of a few million here and there has nothing to do with maintaining the health care budget.

We want you to talk to the nurses who are losing their jobs in my community, and instead of addressing the seniors where I come from, where there is a high level of discomfort now about how their health care is going — last week and the weekend before, I spent some time canvassing in my own riding. I went to the people of Windsor-Sandwich with a survey. I said: "I need to know your opinion and make sure I'm on the right track with what the government's doing. Let's talk about some of the changes since the Harris government began its work." There were some areas that our constituents in Windsor-Sandwich agreed with outright: "We're glad the government is having a look at areas that in the past may have been sacred cows."

1250

But I was in a seniors' neighbourhood and there was particular concern about health care. People were worried. At every door I knocked on, people said, "My friend," "my relative," "my mother," "my family member" — someone had had some interaction with the local hospital or with the local health care system and did not have a good experience. Now, this didn't just happen overnight. The minister, as he is well aware, as health critic in the five years before he became minister, knew what the impending problems were in health care, which really doesn't excuse the kind of behaviour he has done since becoming minister. He knew that when you threw the kinds of things he did, as he did to our doctors, in particular the obstetricians, it was going to be the straw that broke the camel's back. It certainly happened in my community, and our people are worried about it.

When the seniors heard they were going to be paying a user fee for drugs, I'd say "going ballistic" might be too kind. They were furious because seniors were told across Ontario by Mike Harris, "No new user fees" and



that their health care costs would remain the same, that they were going to get the kind of service they always got. Well, talk to the people, many of whom are at that fixed income level who indeed will be paying fees. I'll tell you, they're not appreciative at all.

It was interesting that while I was at the door, one of the most common issues that came up was the issue of youth unemployment. At almost every door I went to, they said to me, "My son," "my grandson," "our 30-year-old," can't find that first job. I found that striking because that wasn't even a question on the survey, and yet all of them said in general comments, "We've got a real problem with jobs." I said, "You know, I'm glad to hear you say that, because as opposition members we've been saying that from the beginning."

The Harris government has been very quiet since the day they were elected. They have not mentioned their promise of 725,000 jobs in Ontario, and if we push them on that we want to say: What kind of jobs are those jobs going to be, at what level, at what level of pay? What kind of services are we bringing in in the privatization of Ontario government services, that will hire people in the private sector and will be low-paying jobs, where we're just making a shift from middle-class levels to lower than that? Are our people going to be any better off? I would say they're not.

Another example in terms of what's happening in my community that's just infuriating to parents is the issue of portables in schools. Many members in the House have heard this issue before about Sacred Heart/Sacré-Coeur in LaSalle. We've got a terrible problem with portables. But the Minister of Education insists there are no cuts in education that will affect the classroom. Well, we have a school in LaSalle, Sacred Heart/Sacré-Coeur, and the Catholic school board out there was forced to spend \$200,000 to replace an aging, condemned portable that was in the most dismal condition, that the children were using right up until class let out yesterday. And we say this isn't affecting the classroom?

Let's go back for a moment to about what the Minister of Education did do. The Ministry of Education too has to play its part at the cabinet table to determine how much it is cutting because our budget allows for a tax cut. I'm sure the Minister of Education jumped with glee and said: "Yes, me too. I'll find millions in the education system because there are millions of dollars of waste." I'm sure that's what he said. He has a zeal about him, frankly, with this kind of cutting in education, but always with the premise that it was not going to affect the classroom. If that's true, that's a noble goal. I don't think he's getting to that end, though.

Let's talk not only about LaSalle; I don't want people to think I'm focusing on portables in LaSalle only. Let's talk about what's happening around Ontario with portables. In fact, over the course of the last five years or more, there has been a significant growth in portables across Ontario. Let's look at the Minister of Education and Training's own riding. It might be Dufferin-Peel Roman Catholic Separate School Board. Almost 1,100 portables in his riding alone. This is growth, because portables are growing in Ontario by about 350 portables a year.

Let's look at how much that's costing us. I know in Windsor and LaSalle the Catholic board in the county spent \$200,000 because they had to purchase a new one. We're having a growth rate of 350 portables a year across Ontario.

School boards are being forced to spend that kind of money, of which they have hardly any, frankly, because they've all been cut, and unreasonably so, and yet they're being forced to do that. Why? Because in March the Minister of Education and Training called a moratorium on all capital expenditure across Ontario. How clever was this? A moratorium on all capital expenditure. Let's see how clever it was.

Today, in the Toronto Sun — I didn't say Star, I said Sun so you'd have a better appreciation of it — the "New School Ban Is Illegal." "Education minister John Snobelen's blanket ban on new school construction breaks the law." Thank you, Minister. Thank you. This a member of the crown who's breaking the law. Let's find out why: Justice Bruce Hawkins refuses to rule out the entire new-school freeze, but chooses instead to order the ministry to give immediate final approval to the \$10-million francophone high school that indeed had challenged the ban. The lawyers for that case said "because the clearly inadequate facilities of the school had not been taken into account when the ban was" first put in place.

You don't think that a minister of the crown, whose job it is to ensure quality education at a premium level in Ontario, would have known that the actions taken by his ministry were going to be deemed illegal in a court of law? Well, that is the fact. I think you've got to read your clippings first thing when you come in in the morning.

Really, this isn't new for the minister because he received a letter from me, to which I have not received a response although I've asked for a response repeatedly. But I said to the minister, one of the fastest-growing municipalities in Canada is LaSalle, expanding at an extraordinary rate, housing starts increased by more than 62%; there's phenomenal growth in LaSalle, but LaSalle is not the only area.

There are high-growth areas across Ontario, and all of these areas are experiencing significant problems, not just in education but also in health. So much so that the health ministry had to throw their paltry sums of \$25 million to the hospitals in the high-growth areas because that ministry recognized — and I'm sure the bureaucrats have to take the credit for this because they must have just stayed on and on the minister making him realize that the 18% cuts to the hospitals were absolutely untenable. They simply could not make do. They were simply cutting service to these high-growth areas. So they listed 25 high-growth communities that needed special funding because the 18% cut to hospitals in those high-growth areas was simply unbearable. So the Ministry of Health acknowledged that we have a significant problem in high-growth areas.

Having said that, let's get the Minister of Health to talk to our Minister of Education and Training, to say our high-growth areas in Ontario are having a terrible problem with portables. The most frustrating part of all is that



you are forcing school boards in these areas to double-spend what precious little money they are receiving — in my case, \$200,000 on a portable. You know they're going to have to spend the money again when they build the school. Why would you make these people double-spend their money, especially when you're cutting back to the extent you are?

In many counties across the board, when they took the education cuts to begin with, there was no recognition given for the fact that transportation, for example, within boards in my community had already merged; their services were already joined. They had already found significant savings years ago. So we're not talking about a body that's got a lot of fat that needs to be cut from it. We're talking about some very lean organizations across Ontario that really should have been given special consideration and simply not cut across the board.

I attended a trustees meeting with this school board and I sat among the parents and the trustees in a discussion regarding what they were going to do (1) about the portables, but (2) where they were going to find for their cuts, in order to fund the \$200,000 for the new portable. How many resource teachers were we now going to let go and were we going to be able to keep the music program? And you're telling me the cuts to education are not affecting the classroom? In this particular school we have a significant ratio of children with disabilities, students who attend this school board. You cannot tell me that these cuts have not affected the classroom, in particular for these children. Those are the decisions that are happening at a local level.

The members opposite are going to say, "Oh, it must be the school board." No. Where the government has been very clever is that the people at home and the parents say, "Yes, it's the school board, that darned school board." I say no, because the provincial government has specified where those cuts would happen, that they would happen in transportation, even though there are instances across Ontario where the transportation savings were found years ago. That's foolish; that is simply foolish. People have not thought this out.

Let's look at enrolment trends. This is the same across the board, not just in LaSalle, not just in Windsor, but at Sacré-Coeur/Sacred Heart. This is a pretty easy graph to see, nice colours and all, but it's clear that this enrolment trend is going up. In LaSalle we're expecting populations to continue to grow. So in discussions about that, the problem is not going to go away. We know that the schools are going to have to be built, and we're going to have to address the issue.

The minister has often talked about new financial approaches. In fact, when he talked about the moratorium to begin with, he said that boards are advised that work on approved projects still in the planning and design stages is to be suspended. He said that a number of innovative approaches, such as shared facilities and leasebacks from —

**The Acting Speaker:** Take your seat, please. Following the instructions that you have given me, the House will adjourn until 1:30 of the clock this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1302 to 1330.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### RENT REGULATION

**Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview):** Last evening I hosted a forum on rent control in my riding. Over 200 people turned out to hear for themselves how changes in the current rent control legislation will affect their lives. I would like to thank all the people who attended last night's meeting, especially Mr Alvin Curling, Ms Annamaria Castrilli, the Federation of Metro Toronto Tenants' Associations and the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly.

What became obvious during last night's discussion was that people, especially seniors, are very apprehensive about the current reforms put forward by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Some of the most vulnerable people in Ontario — and I'm referring to single mothers on social assistance, the disabled and seniors on fixed incomes — are all very concerned about the rent increases they will almost certainly get hit with if the government's legislation passes.

What the Premier and the Minister of Housing fail to understand is that in Metro Toronto the occupancy rate is already close to zero. Rents will soar, and caught in the middle will be the countless seniors and others on social assistance who are dependent on rent-controlled housing.

### LABOUR POLICY

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** I rise today to acknowledge that this is the last day of our session here. As we head off into the summer to spend time with our family and friends, we should recognize that there are thousands and thousands of workers and their families who will not be having an enjoyable summer. As a result of this government's anti-worker Bill 7 and its privatization plans, there are workers and their families who have no idea what the future holds for them.

We've seen the example of OPSEU members who have had rights taken away from them under Bill 7, which this government did not run on in terms of getting a mandate, rights that led to a very bloody, bitter and divisive strike which still leaves thousands of public sector workers not knowing what the future holds for them.

We've seen the example of the cleaning staff over in the Macdonald Block who, again directly as a result of this government's Bill 7 taking away their successor rights, were asked to start doing the same job they'd always been performing but for half the pay and with fewer benefits.

In my own community of Hamilton-Wentworth there may be another example of this happening to cleaning staff at the Hamilton-Wentworth police services. It looks like the opportunity under Bill 7 to strip workers of their rights to unions and contracts could affect their ability to have a wage and see their current standard of living drop below.

Of course there are the staff downstairs in the foodservices, the latest example, one we're still dealing with, where people are being asked to come back in a few weeks, working for half the wages they'd earned



before, no benefits and absolutely no gain other than to see this government's mean-spirited agenda of privatization at work as it lowers the value of labour in this province.

For that, this government will pay a price.

#### INTERNATIONAL PLOWING MATCH

**Mr Peter L. Preston (Brant-Haldimand):** I'm pleased to have this opportunity to extend an invitation to all the members of this assembly, their families and friends, and the people of Ontario to attend the Haldimand-Norfolk International Plowing Match and Country Festival, September 17 to 21. This year marks the second time in a row that my riding of Brant-Haldimand has been fortunate to play host to Canada's, if not the world's, largest outdoor agricultural show. Previously the match had been held in Haldimand-Norfolk region in 1935, in the town of Caledonia; in 1957, in the town of Norfolk; and in 1971, in the town of Nanticoke.

Plowing matches have been a part of Ontario farm life for well over a century, with the Ontario Plowmen's Association holding its first provincial match in 1913. Except for the period during the Second World War, the plan of holding a plowing match each fall in a new location has been maintained by the association ever since.

This year's theme summarizes the community pride and hospitality that make Haldimand-Norfolk one of the richest areas in North America, inviting everyone to come "Share Our Fields of Friendship."

In closing, I'd like to extend the warmest of welcomes on behalf of the organizers of this year's international plowing match: Mr Sandy Clay, our ambassador; Mr Craig Yeager —

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** The member's time has expired.

#### ANNIVERSAIRE DU VILLAGE D'ALFRED

**M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott et Russell) :** Au nom des citoyens de Prescott et Russell, je désire rendre un hommage tout particulier à la communauté du village d'Alfred, qui fête cette année le 125<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de la paroisse Saint-Victor.

Dans le cadre des activités du 125<sup>e</sup> anniversaire, le village d'Alfred a présenté dimanche dernier le défilé traditionnel de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste. Ce village de 1200 habitants a reçu près de 10 000 visiteurs, et encore une fois Alfred a fait honneur aux comtés de Prescott et Russell en présentant un défilé de 154 chars allégoriques dans l'harmonie et la joie.

Je voudrais transmettre mes félicitations à toute la population du village d'Alfred, aux bénévoles qui ont fait un travail exceptionnel dimanche et au cours des différentes activités du 125<sup>e</sup> anniversaire, ainsi que des mentions toutes spéciales au président du comité du défilé, Richard Chartrand, à la présidente du comité du 125<sup>e</sup> anniversaire, Claire Péladeau, et au président du comité de la Saint-Jean-Baptiste, Rolland Péladeau.

#### FOODSERVICES STAFF

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** Earlier today I called upon people watching the legislative broadcast channel to come down here to Queen's Park to meet the victims of Mike Harris and his economic violence, those 22 workers downstairs in the restaurant and cafeteria who as of Friday have no jobs, no jobs to come to Monday. These \$80,000-a-year-plus Tory backbenchers, while they're still going to get a paycheque next week, the foodservice workers aren't. Notwithstanding short notice, some 20 people showed up here at noon today wanting to stand in the cafeteria and in the restaurant in support and in solidarity with those victims of Mike Harris's violence. Some of them have joined us here today in the members' gallery.

I tell you, these Tory members have nothing but shame, nothing but the most extreme shame to feel about their victimization of little people, people who have worked hard day in and day out here at Queen's Park, people who have offered — catch this, Speaker — to accept wage concessions, people who have offered to develop a plan whereby prices can be increased. But, oh, no. Do these Tory hacks with their \$80,000-plus incomes want to pay what's fair for the foodservices they receive from those workers? No. They've slashed 22 jobs, sending 22 working women and men into poverty and despair, and I tell you, this violence is only just beginning. We're going to be witnesses to more of it. I can't wait until this afternoon when you're being grilled at Legislative Assembly committee, Speaker, to answer for this foul deed.

#### ASTHMA CLINIC

**Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East):** Earlier this week it was my privilege to take part in the ribbon-cutting ceremonies of a new state-of-the-art asthma clinic at Centenary Health Centre in my riding of Scarborough East. The clinic opened through a joint venture between Centenary and Glaxo Wellcome, a major pharmaceutical manufacturer. Centenary was selected as a partner from 37 potential hospital sites across Canada. This clinic will offer a full range of diagnostic, treatment and education services to help asthma sufferers manage their condition better and improve their quality of life.

Centenary Health Centre is providing space to establish the clinic, while Glaxo Wellcome is providing the infrastructure, including construction of the clinic, diagnostic equipment and furnishings. Glaxo Wellcome will manage the clinic, conduct testing, and implement treatment protocols and education programs to ensure optimal patient outcomes. Asthma patients who come to the clinic will learn how to manage their own condition, leading to an improved quality of life. The clinic will provide regular updates of progress to the patient's physician and will also maintain close contact with Centenary Health Centre staff.

Centenary will be able to provide a valuable service to the community it serves and save money based on fewer asthma-related emergency room visits and hospital admissions, which numbered over 600 last year alone, the second most commonly diagnosed condition at Centenary.



In fact, this new clinic expects to serve 3,000 patients in its first year.

Glaxo Wellcome and Centenary Health Centre have shown what it takes to provide top quality health care to Scarborough residents. Through a unique partnership between the public and private sectors, with no taxpayer funding required, this new asthma clinic shows a creative approach to managing the escalating costs of asthma treatment which I hope will become —

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** The member's time has expired.

1340

## HEALTH CARE

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole):** Today at their policy development conference, the Ontario Nurses' Association released their vision for Ontario's health delivery system. Their publicly funded and community governed reorganization model is called an integrated delivery system.

The ONA is to be congratulated. By concentrating on providing quality, appropriate, consumer-oriented and cost-effective care while strictly adhering to the principles of the Canada Health Act, the integrated delivery system, or IDS, is a comprehensive and seamless system of health and health-related social services.

As I've said, the IDS is truly a single, comprehensive health delivery system, including primary, acute and long-term care. Furthermore, the proposed IDS boards would manage the funding envelope for the Ontario drug benefit program, nursing homes and assistive devices for their rostered members. The IDS would be a flexible model, allowing individual communities to decide what type of services they will provide and how they choose to deliver those services.

Funding for health services will be based on a capitation system. Both salary and fee-for-service payment systems will ensure fair compensation options to providers while ensuring the highest quality care for patients.

The Ontario Nurses' Association has put forth a model that should be seriously considered by the Ministry of Health for all Ontario. I ask the minister to stop his piecemeal approach to hospital restructuring such as the madness he's proposed for Thunder Bay. Listen to the Ontario nurses and others who believe —

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** The member's time has expired.

## ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYEES

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** On Monday I met with two physically disabled constituents who have received layoff notices from the Ontario public service. One was a permanent employee and the other is a contract employee who is the only full-time workplace discrimination and harassment prevention adviser with the equal opportunity unit at Management Board Secretariat.

Both of these constituents are visually impaired and can anticipate a great deal more difficulty in finding employment than their able-bodied colleagues. Over a year ago, Management Board signed an agreement with OPSEU mandating an enhanced accountability framework to provide safeguards for persons with disabilities in

order to prevent the adverse discriminatory impact that would otherwise be caused by downsizing. Ten deputy ministers advised the OPS advisory group on equal opportunity for persons with disabilities that they would voluntarily apply the framework to all OPS employees, not just those within OPSEU.

My constituent has now been advised that the voluntary enhanced employment equity accountability measures were discontinued by the repeal of the Employment Equity Act.

If these measures were voluntary, there would be no need to discontinue them because the act was repealed. If this government has any commitment at all to fair treatment of its employees, as they claim, they should do them justice and apply the accountability framework to those employees.

## BELLEVILLE WATERFRONT FESTIVAL

**Mr E.J. Douglas Rollins (Quinte):** I rise today to inform the House of the annual Belleville Waterfront Festival and Folklorama, which will run the weekend of July 12, 13 and 14. The festival takes place in the harbour area of the beautiful Bay of Quinte and draws 125,000 people during the three-day event. This year highlights of the festival include a beach volleyball tournament, waterski show, parade of boats, the ever popular bellyflop contest, and musical headliners Burton Cummings and Colin James.

All of this is included in the price of your shore pass button, which is just \$3 before the festival and \$5 during the weekend. The three sites of the festival will once again be Meyers Pier, Victoria Park and Zwick's Island. All three areas will feature continuous food and entertainment. Zwick's Island will include a special children's village for the kids with a midway and some of the best children's entertainment available.

I would like to congratulate the Belleville Waterfront Festival committee for their efforts to ensure the success of this year's event, and I would like to invite all members of the Legislature, as well as those people watching at home, to come down to Belleville July 12, 13 and 14 and share in the festivities of the Belleville Waterfront Festival and Folklorama.

## VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** I'd like to inform the members that we have in the Speaker's gallery today the Midwestern Higher Education Commission, led by the Honourable Dick Schafrath, the Honourable Brian Rude and the Honourable LeRoy Stumpf. Welcome to our guests.

Please welcome the Leader of the Opposition of the National Assembly of the Republic of El Salvador, the Honourable David Acuna, accompanied by Consul General Boris Sandoual. Please join me in welcoming our guests.

I would also like to inform the members that we have in the other Speaker's gallery today an Italian delegation led by Mr Giofranco Fini, leader of the National Alliance Party, accompanied by Mr Marco Zacchera and Mr Gino Malgieri. Welcome.



## LEGISLATIVE PAGES

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** I'd like to also inform the members that this is the last day in the House for our current group of pages. I know all members will join with me in thanking these pages for their hard work in the chamber and wish them all the best in their future endeavours. Thank you.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY  
AND RESPONSES

## COURT SYSTEM

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** I am delighted to tell you today that this government has just taken steps to make it easier to encourage volunteerism and promote charities. As you know, encouraging volunteerism is something this government feels very strongly about. We have appointed Durham-York MPP Julia Munro, who is also parliamentary assistant to the Premier, to lead an initiative to support the spirit of volunteerism in the province.

Today I am introducing the Courts Improvement Act. It includes amendments to the Charities Accounting Act that will eliminate the requirement for charities to go to court for technical matters, including the permission to use charitable funds to purchase directors' liability insurance.

The current process requires court approval in issues where there's no serious dispute. This results in wasteful expenditures to charities and the unnecessary use of court resources.

Currently the law does not address the business problems charities face in the 1990s of operating their organizations according to modern business principles and continuing to attract qualified volunteer directors. For example, the purchase of liability insurance is considered to be a direct benefit to directors and must be approved by the courts. This has created a barrier for charities and, more importantly, has discouraged qualified individuals from volunteering to sit on boards of charitable organizations.

Courts normally authorize these requests. We are eliminating this costly and time-consuming hurdle. Today we are taking steps to eliminate red tape. As part of the amendments, regulations will clarify the law to enable charities to employ modern business practices and avoid the need to go to court for approval for many technical matters.

We are improving the ability of charities to operate without seeking court approval by allowing, by regulation:

A person who uses a charity's service to sit on its board of directors.

A director to provide his or her service to the charity. Charities to administer and manage special-purpose or restricted funds for charitable purposes.

Charities to adopt more modern recordkeeping requirements for charitable property and assets.

These changes will facilitate and encourage volunteerism in our province and allow charities to continue to attract qualified people to volunteer to sit on their boards. These amendments to the Charities Accounting Act are part of the courts improvement bill, which contains other initiatives designed to improve court operations.

Earlier today I announced the consolidation, at 393 University Avenue, of the six civil court sites currently scattered throughout Toronto. This represents a capital investment in the justice system of \$12 million. By fall of 1996, 23 additional courtrooms will be completed. The consolidation will provide faster, more affordable and accessible service to the public.

In addition, the new Windsor justice facility is the result of an innovative partnership with the city of Windsor to construct a Provincial Division courthouse and city police headquarters.

These changes are aimed at improving operation of the courts. They are consistent with the government's overall goals to reduce red tape for our business and charitable partners. But most of all, the changes will assist in nurturing the spirit of volunteerism in Ontario, and from that we all benefit.

1350

**Ms Annamarie Castrilli (Downsview):** The Attorney General has made two very interesting announcements today. Particularly with respect to the announcement with regard to charities, the change is welcome. It has indeed been a bureaucratic nightmare for charities and has created a great deal of delay in providing assistance to the charities.

I also applaud the consolidation of the courts. May I say at this point as well that I applaud the efforts of the mayor and the city council of Windsor, who have been participating diligently in making sure that this came about. Any efficiencies are welcome, and when those appear, we certainly take notice of them.

But the Attorney General knows that a great number of problems still remain, and this does not address that. We've seen recently that criminal charges are being thrown out of court. I've had occasion to speak with numerous crown attorneys, to travel throughout the province talking to crown attorneys, even to be in my own courthouse, and what is happening there is quite scary. Some 470 crown attorneys have what is an unmanageable caseload and are being funded at the lowest level in Canada, yet with the highest caseload in Canada. Their jobs are now in danger.

The investment fund that was promised in order to deal with the numerous crimes has not taken place. The Association of Law Officers of the Crown still don't have an agreement. They're the only group that does not yet have a bargaining agreement with you, Minister.

You have indicated on more than one occasion that now we won't prosecute certain crimes; that break and enters will not be prosecuted; that threats will not be prosecuted; that fraud will not be prosecuted.

While these changes are welcome, there is the serious issue of public safety here which this announcement does not address and which continues for the people of Ontario. It continues primarily for vulnerable people, for seniors, for women, for those who have least recourse to



the justice system. Those are the very people who, when attacked, will not have any recourse in the courts. That is a system which isn't fair. That's a system that leads to a two-tier level of justice. Nothing in this statement changes that fact, that you are creating a two-tier system of justice. Those who cannot afford to have a lawyer and continue to prosecute will find themselves in considerable difficulty.

Minister, while I say to you again that the consolidation is a good thing and helping charities do their work more efficiently is a good thing, there are so many issues that you are ignoring, whether wilfully or not, and it is something that you must pay particular attention to, because the people of Ontario will hold you accountable if you do not look after these very serious concerns. I urge you to look at these matters. They're very urgent matters. It is your responsibility to ensure that the people of Ontario are safe and secure in their own homes, in their own communities.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Unfortunately, what the minister has announced is not sufficient to solve the problems that we have in the system, as the members from Windsor would tell you and have told many people on these occasions. What is particularly concerning to people across the province is this understanding that some cases are going to be put way at the bottom of the priority list, and we could have a situation where if the police don't feel that they have the best possible case or if the prosecution believes they don't have the best possible case — in other words, don't have a good chance of winning — we're going to see those moved to the sideline.

Senior citizens in this province and others who feel particularly vulnerable are going to want to encourage the Treasurer to give the Attorney General sufficient funds to be able to carry out his responsibilities, because they've already watched how in Metropolitan Toronto they have lost 1,000 police officers. They're down 1,000 from five years ago.

We want to ensure that the appropriate law enforcement opportunities are there, and unfortunately this announcement does not address that.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** I'm pleased about some of the things in this announcement and need to congratulate the minister on taking the next steps necessary in terms of the volunteer sector, in terms of the charities act.

This was certainly part of the recommendations and the discussion that went around the Civil Justice Review, getting some of these issues out of the courts where they don't properly or necessarily have to belong and making it more possible for those many organizations across the province that do fine work within our communities to attract people who can contribute a great deal to the development of public policy and act in the public interest across the province. That part of the act the minister is introducing today, the Courts Improvement Act, I think he will find garners nothing but praise from the charitable sector, and I think he will find that is a very important change to be made.

I would say to the minister that I'm a bit more apprehensive about what might be in the rest of the bill,

because there's only one little paragraph in his announcement which says, "These amendments to the Charities Accounting Act are part of the courts improvement bill which contains other initiatives designed to improve court operations." I will look with great interest at the bill and at the compendium of the bill, because with the work that's been done through both the Martin commission on the criminal side and through the Civil Justice Review, there are many suggestions that have been made about streamlining court procedure.

The other day in this House, in response to a member of his own party, the Attorney General talked about the technology changes that are necessary in order to streamline some of the procedures. I think you will find that if that is what is being allowed for within the Courts Improvement Act, you will get a great deal of respect and response from the legal community and from the public at large, because we know that the antiquated system, which is maybe a little advanced from a quill pen, is still very antiquated in terms of actually doing those procedures.

I fully congratulate the minister for the consolidation of the civil courts. This is something that has been a dream within the legal profession within Metro Toronto for a long time, to see those court sites consolidated, to improve the efficiency of the management of the courts and the case management of the courts, and it is certainly good that you are able to do that. I look forward to understanding how you can do that with only a capital investment of \$12 million. I think it is very interesting that you have managed that.

With respect to Windsor, it's a great relief to the people in the Windsor area to know there will be new court facilities. What is not happy for them is the reduction of those courtrooms to 10, which is a bit of a problem. Certainly we had gone through a long process of public discussion —

**Hon Mr Harnick:** Wrong.

**Mrs Boyd:** Wrong? Why? That is what the announcement was, a 10-courtroom kind of situation.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** Twenty courtrooms in Windsor.

**Mrs Boyd:** A 20-courtroom situation? That is wonderful to hear.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** Twenty courtrooms in all situations.

**Mrs Boyd:** That is great. I am very pleased to hear that the public announcement of this was correct, because that is essential.

I should say to the minister very clearly that we understand these are only first steps and that within those first steps you will face some opposition. There will be those who resist the kinds of changes you are proposing to streamline the courts. I think it is important for you to recognize the real fear that was expressed by my colleague in the opposition around a two-tiered level of justice. It is going to be extraordinarily important for us in this province to make sure that those who have are not the only ones who have access to justice; that those who do not have physical resources, who do not have monetary resources enjoy the full benefit of equity before and under the law in this province.

I look forward to reading the rest of the bill, and can tell the minister that his biggest task at this point is to



keep those who are engaged in the whole business, from the beginning to the end, of bringing justice to the people of Ontario in this process, because that is essential. It cannot happen where there is uncertainty, where there are job fears. It is going to be extraordinarily important for these changes to be made in a sensitive way that does not embroil the minister in the kinds of controversies that have been hinted at by my honourable colleague, so I encourage the minister to take that under advisement.

1400

#### HEALTH SERVICES RESTRUCTURING COMMISSION

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: It's actually a point of personal privilege, if I may, because I'm feeling at this moment in time that my privilege as an elected representative for Fort William and of the broader community of Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario has been violated in such a way that it's hard for me to express it, by the fact that the Minister of Health is not here today to speak to the very disastrous decisions that his first restructuring commission report will bring to bear on my community.

After having delegated his authority to this commission, having allowed this commission to make decisions behind closed doors, with no input, with no information even provided to elected representatives, let alone to hospital board members, it seems that at the very least the Minister of Health should have been here to speak and to answer for the kinds of decisions his commission is imposing on my community and on the residents of northwestern Ontario.

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### PUBLIC INQUIRIES

**Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming):** I have questions today for the Attorney General. There's a new pattern of law enforcement since your colleague Bob Runciman took over as top cop and chief jailer here in Ontario. Within the first year of the Harris government there has been a more violent and aggressive tone to how the police and corrections officials have reacted to disruptions across this province.

From Ipperwash to the riot squad response to the strike situation here at Queen's Park and to the Elgin-Middlesex alleged beating incident that happened on March 1, your government has established a very new standard of law enforcement here. I think it would be fair to say that under Runciman's leadership, law enforcement today in Ontario is in chaos. There is a new and disturbing pattern of law enforcement in this province.

Today the public service union in corrections has called for an independent investigation of how corrections officials have handled the investigation since the alleged beatings. I've stood in this place for over the last four weeks and I've called for, in turn, a legislative inquiry, a public inquiry, or at the very least to bring in an outside, independent police force to investigate how corrections

officials have handled this. Minister, you have the power to announce a public inquiry. Will you do the right thing and do that today?

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** The Solicitor General has very adequately answered this question on numerous occasions. He's outlined to this House the very comprehensive investigatory procedures that he's now taking, and that is certainly the right direction to go in. That's what he's doing and he's been very clear about that.

**Mr Ramsay:** I beg to differ with the minister because what he's talked about is an incestuous investigation. It's family investigating family, and we'll never get to the truth unless you bring an outside, independent investigator into this.

Since these allegations of beatings on March 1 and since June 5 when the minister said he first learned about this, we have had charges made about how the evidence has been handled and the way officials in that ministry have handled this investigation. Today the union has brought forward letters that were sent to the investigator that weren't responded to by the investigator to the complainant. This is standard procedure in any investigation and it did not happen.

The minister has stated that as part of his internal review he sent in his own officials to the institution a few weekends ago. This happened before the police got in to see the evidence. From that we have allegations of shredding of evidence and we know the officials accused of these beatings have seen the complete child advocate's report, a report the minister won't make public, despite my urging over the last few weeks.

Like Ipperwash, like the dramatic picket line incident here at Queen's Park, this situation also appears to be out of control. Minister, I again ask you to clear the air. We've got to get to the truth. Will you today call for a public inquiry?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** The member indicates very strongly and emphasizes the word "allegations," and that's exactly what they are. That's exactly why the Solicitor General has taken the steps he has taken to properly investigate into these matters. That is being done and it's absolutely the correct thing to be done. There's no question that it's moving forward.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Final supplementary.

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition):** The situation at Elgin-Middlesex and Judge Estey's report on the March 18 riot are not the only issues that will continue to confront you and your colleagues and your government over the course of this summer. The circumstances surrounding the death of Dudley George at Ipperwash almost a year ago are going to have to be addressed this summer. A host of unanswered questions continue to swirl around this tragic incident: Who was aware that the OPP were amassing hundreds of officers at Ipperwash? Who knew that the OPP were preparing to use force to clear the park? Who gave the directives for this to occur? Who was informed of these directives?

Minister, you have repeatedly told this House that you can't call a public inquiry into this matter because it is still before the SIU, even though these specific questions



are not matters that the SIU will investigate. The SIU report, shamefully and inexcusably late, will be out this summer. Your excuse for not having a public inquiry will be gone.

Will you commit today, before this House recesses, to setting up a public inquiry as soon as the SIU report has come?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** The member knows full well that the SIU report is pending. She also knows that in October, I believe on October 20 or 21, some 22 criminal cases will be heard as a result of charges laid pertaining to this issue. She as much as anyone in this Legislature would not like to see the government do anything that would jeopardize the fair prosecution of those charges or that would impact in any negative way on what the SIU findings might or might not be.

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mrs McLeod:** I repeat that the questions that we believe need to be addressed in public inquiry are not questions the SIU can address.

#### RENT REGULATION

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition):** I will address my second question to the Minister of Housing. Earlier this week you and your government broke your promise to tenants and you killed rent control. What you have presented is not a tenant protection package, as you like to pretend it is; it is a tenant rejection package. You have sentenced tenants to their apartments because if they dare to move, they are going to have to pay higher rents.

Minister, will you admit what everybody else knows, that your decision to kill rent control will cause rents to go up, not down, as you once promised?

**Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** Today I repeat that what we brought in as far as rent control is concerned is a fair and balanced package. It's fair to tenants. They have an opportunity to stay under rent control as long as they're in their units. They have an opportunity to sit down with a landlord and negotiate a new rent, should they decide to select a new place to live. It's balanced and fair for landlords because it gives them an opportunity to get a fair return on their investment for new apartments that will be built. It also gives them an opportunity to negotiate a new rent with a new tenant when a unit becomes vacant.

**Mrs McLeod:** Very clearly this minister does not know what he's talking about, but unfortunately his continued pretence to knowledge of what is not reality is really going to hurt people if these proposals go ahead.

It is so evident, simple from your proposals that once a tenant moves, every protection on that apartment is gone; rent control on that apartment is gone. Your scheme punishes everyone except landlords, and there is one group that my colleagues already have raised in this House this week that is going to be particularly hard hit, the most obvious of all: students in this province.

You keep saying that as long as somebody stays in their apartment, they don't need to worry. Students are worried. It's the very nature of students that they do not stay long in their apartments. They move every year. I've been out talking to students who are already worried

about the high cost of tuition they're facing this September. Now they have to worry about drastically increased rents.

Minister, how do you justify the economic hardship that your decision to gut rent control is going to have on students in this province?

**Hon Mr Leach:** I totally disagree with the Leader of the Opposition. I don't think that our policies will have any effect on students whatsoever, because it's the market that will set rents. In most university towns, those locations where students stay are very competitive. They're going to rent them out to students at what the market will bear. That's what's happening now and that is what will continue to happen in the future.

1410

**Mrs McLeod:** Try telling that to students who are looking at going to the University of Toronto, right next door to us, in September. It's not a question of what you believe, what you would like to think is out there. It's a question of reality and it's a question of what your policies are actually going to do to people.

Your tactics are going to encourage landlords to gouge tenants who are desperate for housing. Your scheme is going to lead to a drastic increase in the number of evictions because the evictions are already skyrocketing because people already cannot afford their rents. Your policies are going to reward landlords when those tenants move out. It rewards them with higher rent. So there will be no incentive to improve the rental accommodation to keep tenants. There will be every incentive to force them out. There'll be no incentive for people who are already facing eviction because they can't afford their rents to negotiate lower rents. There is every incentive to let apartments deteriorate so tenants will be forced to move so that they can raise the rent or convert to condominiums.

How can you possibly deny that your plan is going to encourage landlord harassment of tenants? How can you deny that unfair evictions and harassment are indeed going to occur?

**Hon Mr Leach:** We didn't make any changes in the eviction procedures whatsoever. We have exactly the same type of legislation that was there in the NDP rent control package.

I have to repeat this — I have discussed this with tenant groups, I have discussed this with landlord groups. We have incorporated the suggestions from both of those groups and put forward a package that is very fair and very balanced. We plan to take it out to the people of Ontario over the summer to give them the opportunity to comment and have further input into our package, which I believe is very good now. If there are ways and means of making it even better, we would encourage that.

The other thing I can't understand is that the Leader of the Opposition sits there and praises the existing rent control system as if it was perfect, when her whole party voted against it when the NDP brought it in.

#### YOUNG OFFENDERS

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** My question is to the Premier. On this last day of the Legislature, it's



rather disturbing and perhaps suggestive, to say the least, that the Solicitor General will not be here in question period as he has been the prime focus of public concern for the last two weeks.

Premier, last week in a media scrum when you were asked about the very serious allegations made by young people within the care of your government, you said, "I don't even have enough information to know whether I should be disturbed about that or not, but we'll get to the bottom of it all." Well, over a week has passed since you made that statement. Have you met with the Solicitor General? What have you done in the last week to satisfy yourself and rebuild public confidence that the member of your cabinet, the Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services, is dealing with this situation in an appropriate and open manner?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** Let me, first of all, say that the question is premised that this has been the overriding concern of the public for the last few weeks. It has not been the overriding concern of the public for the last few weeks. In fact it's been the lowest of all the significant issues on the list of letters, of phone calls in to me. That doesn't mean, though, that it isn't an important issue — I just want to set the record straight — that it has been at the top of your list and it has been a very important issue for us and for the Solicitor General.

My staff have had several discussions with staff at the Ministry of the Solicitor General. I have talked to the Solicitor General and I am satisfied that this matter is being handled by the Solicitor General with the utmost of confidence, given the circumstances and everything that have been involved. The Solicitor General has been available I don't know how many days in a row for the past number of weeks to answer those questions and with what information that can be made public. I don't think there is anything additional than can be proffered today.

**Mrs Boyd:** You stood here in this House and defended the minister's action, and yet you admitted immediately afterwards in a scrum that you didn't know enough about the situation to know if you should be disturbed. Quite frankly, that raises very serious questions in the minds of parents whose children may be in the care of this government.

There have been very serious and disturbing allegations made, and it is very distressing that a week ago you told this province that you didn't know enough about it to even comment. It's been all over the papers. It's been reported in the press, on television. We've raised the question here week after week now, and I find it hard to believe that you as Premier would not have bothered to inform yourself of these very disturbing allegations and exactly what has been done to counter the lack of confidence that is building in your minister's ability to deal with this very serious issue.

The minister pretends ignorance or is ignorant; it really matters not which it is because the fact of the matter is he's out of control of what's going on in his ministry and there are young people, vulnerable young people, who are in the care of this government and who themselves and their parents no longer have any faith in the ability of this

minister to protect the safety and security of their person as they're guaranteed under the Constitution.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Put your question.

**Mrs Boyd:** Before further investigations are jeopardized — and you have heard through our questions why there is concern that these investigations may have been jeopardized — will you recognize the incompetence that your minister has showed and demand his resignation?

**Hon Mr Harris:** No.

**Mrs Boyd:** Then, Premier, it calls into question your ability to guarantee that the public has reason to have confidence in your ability to lead this province and ensure the safety of young people in the care of your government.

What you tell us is that it's okay for a minister not to know for three months about a serious issue like this that happened within his ministry. What you're telling us is it's okay with you that an acting deputy minister and two deputy ministers, who report directly to you, didn't make sure you knew about this issue. You're telling us it's okay that managers, who themselves are under a cloud of suspicion because of the allegations, are carrying out investigations, are having access to possible evidence and are making statements to the detriment of the child advocate, who brought these issues to the attention of the public and indeed to the government.

I want you to know that as first minister, you are responsible, ultimately, for whether this government is seen to be acting competently in protection of young people in its care. The public and the staff of the ministry do not have confidence in your ability to ensure that the minister is acting appropriately. How many examples, Premier, of the incompetence of this minister do you need to have brought to your attention before you demand his resignation? Are you not embarrassed by the whole thing that has happened since March 1? If you're not, you should be. It has embarrassed everybody in this province that this government doesn't have control over this kind of issue when it involves young people.

**Hon Mr Harris:** First of all, the member says that I am telling people that a number of these things are okay. I'm not telling the people that at all. You've been telling them that. Most of it is untrue. Most of it is false, and for you to attribute your allegations as saying that is what I am saying is not only erroneous but to impugn what I am saying or my motive is actually quite false. I think you might want to reflect on what it was you said and probably withdraw it.

Secondly, let me assure you that I have taken what steps I believe are appropriate to ensure that the safety of the children is utmost in our minds. I think the parents can have utmost confidence in that.

Thirdly, you allege that we say it's okay that the minister didn't know for a period of months. It's not okay. The minister said it's not okay and I said it's not okay, and that is part of the review the minister has told you has taken place. Why did this happen? Let's make sure that part never happens again as well.

I say to you that the appropriate steps are being taken, both as far as the internal review from the ministry point of view is concerned as well as the investigation into



what occurred. I am satisfied of that, as I believe are the vast majority of the public. You, I understand, are not satisfied, but I doubt, given your partisanship, that we'll ever satisfy your expectations or at least what you will publicly say are your expectations, which is why you are over there.

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### GREAT LAKES WATER QUALITY

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is for the Minister of Environment. Today the International Joint Commission released the eighth biannual report on Great Lakes water quality. The commission in its report warns that cutbacks in environmental regulations, enforcement and funding will jeopardize protection of the environment. It also offers numerous recommendations. The report raises concerns about your government's proposals to deregulate environmental protection and compliance requirements. You have already gutted your ministry and your next move will be yet another attack by your government on our ecosystems and on human health.

In view of today's IJC report, will you stop your deregulation plans that are nothing more than an attempt to appease your corporate friends and will you guarantee that you will implement the recommendations of the IJC report? Will you do that, Minister?

**Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Environment and Energy):** I would just like to say that this government is committed to continuing to work on the cleanup of the Great Lakes. We consider the water quality of the Great Lakes to be very important to the citizens of this province, to the wellbeing of this province.

There are economic challenges facing not only this government but facing the federal government. I say to my colleague across the way, yes, it's true we're undergoing a regulatory review in our ministry. I say to my colleague across the way that this government knows the difference between process and prevention. We know that needless process spoils prevention in this province and leads to inaction and inactivity and we're not going to allow it.

**Mr Hampton:** It's interesting to match the words of the Minister of Environment with the words of the critics. The IJC says that the existing regulatory framework needs to be maintained if we are going to restore and protect the Great Lakes. What has this minister done? Well, this minister has weakened Ontario's clean water regulations, and the effect of that will allow more toxic pollution to enter our lakes and rivers. This minister said a few weeks ago that air is a problem. Under this minister I suspect that water is going to become a problem as well.

Minister, you are, in effect, clear-cutting environmental regulations that protect human health. That's what you're doing. You're going through the ministry, you're going through the regulations; anything that is designed to protect environmental quality, anything that is designed in the long term to protect human health you are gutting or getting rid of.

The IJC is an independent body. They're giving you some recommendations. Tell us, do you intend to implement the recommendations of the IJC?

**Hon Mrs Elliott:** We are working closely to implement the recommendations of the International Joint Commission. For the first time the joint commission began to talk about air issues. Let me tell you what we're doing in the province of Ontario. We have just initiated a comprehensive smog strategy to actually find solutions to the air problems, not just to talk about them any more. We're working towards a 45% reduction in emissions in this province by the year 2015. We are going to see results from a multi-stakeholder comprehensive approach that will work.

I can tell you that we've undertaken in our ministry a groundwater strategy that hasn't been undertaken for years and years and years.

Yes, we're working on regulatory review because we understand that every dollar that's wasted on process is a dollar that doesn't get invested in real protection, in abatement, in conservation, and we need to do those things. We are going to see results from the changes that are happening in the Ministry of Environment and they are going to present real protection to the air and the water quality of this province.

**Mr Hampton:** It's important that people understand what the minister calls "process." These regulations are laws. They're laws designed to protect the environment, and now we have a Minister of Environment who's going to do away with those laws, the very laws designed to protect the environment, and she says it's just process.

Let me tell you what's happening in this process. Corporate polluters are going to have a heyday. They're going to have great fun. They're going to be able to produce toxic pollutants, put them in the water, in the lakes, in the rivers, and you won't do a damned thing about it.

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** Back to the 1950s.

**Mr Hampton:** That's where we're heading, back to the 1950s.

In view of the fact that you're gutting our environmental laws, how are you going to live up to our obligations under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement once you deregulate our environmental standards? How are you going to meet those international obligations?

**Hon Mrs Elliott:** I don't think my colleague understands what we're actually doing in the ministry. Yes, we're looking at regulations, but we're not looking at deregulation. We are not looking at a diminishment of standards. We're looking at getting rid of the kinds of regulations that are needless and drive people insane in this province.

Do you know there was a regulation in this province that required people to bury pesticide containers, required them to do that? Those are the kinds of regulations that we are getting rid of.

### HEALTH SERVICES RESTRUCTURING COMMISSION

**Mrs Lyn McLeod (Leader of the Opposition):** In the absence of the Minister of Health, I will place a question to the Premier.

Premier, the first report of your hospital restructuring commission has just hit our community, and I'm aware



that since this report has just come out you will not be aware of the specific contents; I would not expect you to comment on specifics. But I think you should know that this set of recommendations will be absolutely devastating to health care in my community and I believe to the residents of northwestern Ontario, as our community serves the entire regional needs of northwestern Ontario.

I think you should know, Premier, that this commission appointed by your minister spent less than a month, parachuted into our community, coming and going on a periodic basis. They held their meetings behind closed doors. They held their meetings with no permission of public hearings or any kind of public consultation. In less than one month they have rejected out of hand the plan for health care that our community had agreed to, a plan our community had worked towards literally for years. Premier, I tell you that this first report of the hospital restructuring commission is the worst nightmare of Bill 26, hitting with the full force of reality.

I have to tell you that one of the most amazing things is the way in which this report not only directs the future of health care in our community but directs your own minister and your own government, and I read you just one way in which this report is stated.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Put your question, please.

**Mrs McLeod:** I am, Mr Speaker.

The report says, "The Health Services Restructuring Commission directs the Minister of Health to implement the following directions."

Premier, do you really condone that kind of dictatorship by an appointed commission? Do you really believe that your Minister of Health can get away with having no responsibility for these disastrous decisions? Do you not believe that you and your government must take responsibility and cannot be directed by a commission that your minister has appointed?

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** I appreciate and have noted the member's concerns. I also heard the point of privilege at the start. As you know, the Minister of Health is one of the most regular attenders at question period, but he is at a federal-provincial meeting on seniors' issues. This government takes those issues very seriously, as I know all members will agree, as evidenced by the very strong support we've given to seniors in the province.

I want to say there has been a lot of studies, as the member has indicated, but what there has not been over the last 10 years is any action. The goal of this government is to assemble all the information and studies and actually take action. If you look at the number of beds that have been closed by both your government and the predecessor government, it was the equivalent of some 33 hospitals, but there were no administrative savings really achieved in any of those actions.

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The second goal of the government was to say these decisions ought not to be political but ought to be made in the best interests of quality service by those who have expertise in these areas, and I think the quality of the restructuring commission was one that has been accepted by the professionals throughout the province.

However, I understand that if all of a sudden somebody disagrees with a decision, one wants to challenge that and have political interference and political intervention. I think the methodology has been the correct one to try and deal with very difficult situations. You're quite right, I've not seen the report. In fact, I don't think it's been received yet, technically, by the ministry, and there'll be an appropriate response —

**The Speaker:** The question has been answered.

**Mrs McLeod:** Premier, with what you've just said, I sincerely hope you will look at this report and review the process as well as the recommendations that are here.

The reason the health restructuring commission came into my community first was because they understood that a great deal of progress had already been made; that there was — and I think it is unique in the province — an amalgamated regional hospital board; that there was an agreement on the restructuring of acute care services; that there has been a progressive rationalization, with the most recent decisions being made no less than a week ago.

There was clearly not enough money. The lack of commitment of funds to what our community believed was in its best interests is the real issue here, and I ask you to look at that. I can tell you that this will be seen as a cost-cutting agenda that has gone absolutely wild. It is cost-cutting by your government at the expense of the health care of the residents of my community and the residents of northwestern Ontario, and we will find that unacceptable.

Premier, I draw this to your attention in my supplementary question. There was certainly an area on which there was not consensus in our community. There was agreement on acute care and its direction. There was not consensus on mental health services and the closure of the Lakehead Psychiatric Hospital. Yet in this report — and I tell you, it is shocking — the psychiatric hospital is to be closed. This is not even advice, it is a direction of your commission to close our psychiatric hospital by March 1997.

I don't know where the psychiatric patients are going to go in my community. They are certainly not going to be accommodated in our acute care hospital, as we go from three acute care hospitals to one and 611 beds to 301 beds. They are not going to be able to be accommodated in psychogeriatric units, which will be dumped out of the psychiatric hospital as you close one of our chronic care hospitals. They will be on the streets of our community, Premier.

What happened to the moratorium your own Minister of Health just recently placed on the closure of any psychiatric beds? Where do you think that psychiatric patients in my community are going to go? Will you please review what I believe is not only a disastrous set of recommendations for our community but is the beginning of war on the issue of health care with every community in this province.

**Hon Mr Harris:** I am certain, because of the delay of action by the two former governments and just compounding the problem, that we know the reason. These are not easy decisions, and parochial vested interests come into play. I haven't seen the report. I understand what everybody was in consensus about: Let's have a



new \$200-million or \$300-million hospital and have somebody else pay for it. I understand that's an easy thing to come to consensus about, and I'm gathering from what you're saying that the restructuring commission has suggested that that perhaps is not the most efficient way to proceed. But we'll see when we have a look at the report. If that's what you're suggesting, I accept the advice and input that I assume you want me to pass on to the Minister of Health.

I think one of the other allegations was that regardless of how professional and non-partisan we are in this, the government at the end of the day will be held accountable. We accept that. We'll be held accountable for all the decisions we make and the processes we put in place, just as you were held accountable in 1990 for doing nothing and just as the NDP were held accountable in 1995 for doing nothing.

All I can tell you is, the status quo and doing nothing is not acceptable. If you are arguing for the status quo and doing nothing, that's fine, but I can tell you that the people of Ontario voted for an action-oriented government that would stop delays in the types of decisions that were made. That was our mandate, and we intend to proceed with that mandate.

#### REPORT ON RACE RELATIONS

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is for the Attorney General. This is the report of the Commission on Systemic Racism in the Ontario Criminal Justice System. The report makes a number of very helpful recommendations for the justice system.

It's been six months now since the commission reported, and at the time that you received the report you said you would "review the recommendations carefully." Can you tell us what you and your government have done to implement the recommendations of the commission?

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** The government is concerned about any aspect of the justice system that does not treat all Ontarians fairly and with dignity. The ministry takes the recommendations of the report very seriously and is committed to making the justice system fairer and more accessible to all Ontarians.

As I've indicated, we are reviewing the recommendations in detail. That report took three or four years to complete. It is a voluminous report and a great deal of study went into it. We are reviewing, for instance, all crown procedures that are followed in the context of the report and evaluating the procedures to follow in the context of that report, and that review is ongoing.

**Mr Hampton:** I think what I heard is that the government is studying the report.

The Attorney General will know, for example, that chapter 10 is an excellent chapter on community policing. It lays out a number of recommendations. Chapter 11, "Systemic Response to Police Shootings"; chapter 12, "An Equality Strategy for Justice" — some very specific and concrete recommendations.

While the Attorney General has been studying this, six people have been shot by police this year. All of them have been men of colour, every one of them. Can the

Attorney General assure people that if you had taken the commission's report seriously and started implementing the report, some of those might not have happened?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** I think the leader of the third party should think about what he's just alleged. He should also understand that the report deals with a lot more than just the things he selectively wants to pull out of the air and wants to misconstrue and mislead people about.

This report deals with crown attorneys, with the judiciary, with the Law Society of Upper Canada, with the legal aid plan, with the federal government and the way it handles federal prosecutions, with drug charges, all in the context of minorities and people of colour. I think the leader of the third party should read Hansard, read what he just said, read what he's alleging and take a long, hard thought about it.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Order. The honourable member used the word "mislead." That's not acceptable. I would ask him to now withdraw it. Minister, would you withdraw that word.

**Hon Mr Harnick:** If I've said anything to offend, Mr Speaker, I withdraw it.

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#### INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale):** I have a question for the Premier. Recent reports indicate that there may be another trade mission to East Asia early in 1997. Given that prospect, could you inform the House as to what benefits Ontario achieves by participating in such trade missions and what message you will take on your next trade mission to East Asia.

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** Let me first of all congratulate the member. I think it's the first backbench member's question that has come my way to hold the government accountable for the things we do and the programs we participate in, and I appreciate that, as we should be held accountable.

If the trade mission we are planning to take in East Asia in 1997 has near the success of the Team Canada trade mission we took last year or the one we took in January, then it will indeed be worthwhile. Companies like Monenco Agra of Toronto have signed a number of deals in India for engineering and for recruitment in construction projects; Armtec of Guelph signed an MOU in Jakarta, joint venture; Soheil Mosun, a metal fabricating company in the member's own riding of Etobicoke-Rexdale, a letter of intent with a company in Malaysia could lead to \$40 million worth of business; MDS Laboratories are in your riding and interested in going on the next one; Lovat Tunnel is there; and perhaps the biggest export facilitator of all, Pearson International Airport, I might add, is in the member's riding, so they're great.

The message I take is, Ontario is open for business. The old days where government threw up all these barriers are gone, and these markets are poised to come to Ontario. We are going to get them.

**Mr Hastings:** Mr Premier, based on your experience on your first trade mission to the Far East and other areas last year, what potential changes do you think foreign



investors are looking for in Ontario before they direct their scarce capital here that wasn't coming here when the NDP claimed it was in 1994?

**Hon Mr Harris:** Quite right that the member is trying to get an accounting. Wherever I go they want to know: Are we undoing the damage of the previous government? Are we removing those barriers they know that had existed in Ontario? Have we brought balance to labour legislation? Are we getting taxes under control? Are we getting our deficit under control? I am able to respond that indeed we are undoing 10 years worth of damage.

They ask about the WCB and the neglect of that. Governments have just kind of waltzed along and avoided the tough decisions to get our economic affairs in order.

These are the kinds of questions I am asked. It's a full-time job, and we need to do more of it. I invite every member of the Legislature — Mr Bradley looks up, wondering whether we're going to charter our own 727 like the feds do — at every opportunity to remind potential investors that the old days are gone and the new days are here and that we're open for business.

#### JUSTICE SYSTEM

**Ms Annamarie Castrilli (Downsview):** My question is to the Attorney General. I rise on a very serious matter. You will be aware that four suspected drug traffickers yesterday had their charges stayed because of backlogs in the court system.

It is reported that this situation could occur in other parts of the province because of similar delays. In fact, Mr Justice Ted Matlow stated in the case before him yesterday that it was not that of a single trial getting bogged down. "Rather, it is part of a systemic problem that threatens to shake public confidence in the criminal justice system."

Your government has already broken its promise not to reduce spending on law enforcement. I ask you, Minister, in view of this situation, will you make a commitment that there will be no cuts in your ministry until this very serious problem with backlogs is resolved?

**Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** This is a follow-up to a question I was asked by the same member the other day, who was criticizing me for not having a strategy or because she didn't like the strategy we were developing to ensure that no serious cases would be compromised in their prosecutions. Now I'm being asked, "Why are you developing this?"

This case is the perfect example. We are trying to deal with the intake of cases in the criminal justice system so that we can realistically deal with less serious cases by ensuring that they receive appropriate penalties, either by diversion, community service or payback to the victim. At the same time, we are trying to develop strategies that I was being criticized for by this very member the other day so that we can ensure that we can always prosecute serious crime so this doesn't happen.

This is a throwback of the system that they created when they threw money at it, 50% increases in the criminal justice system in terms of this government's reaction to the same problem and 70,000 cases being

thrown out of court because they wouldn't develop strategies. I suggest that you stop criticizing the strategies that we're trying to develop and work with us to ensure that all serious crime is always prosecuted, that there is no compromise in that prosecution and that we continue to deal with less serious crimes in appropriate ways.

**Ms Castrilli:** I hope the minister isn't saying that from here on he is prepared not to prosecute drug pushers; I hope that's not what he's saying. What we have here is a situation within your control which you are not dealing with, and it's a very serious situation. The problem is that your government has reduced funds to law enforcement. That's the real problem. You had an investment strategy to try to deal with the backlog which in fact you have not put in place. The result is that we now have alleged drug pushers back on the street. The reason you've cut funding to law enforcement, as we all very well know, is because you have chosen to give a tax cut to the very wealthy. That's what's at issue here, Minister.

Isn't it true that these four suspected drug pushers are back on the street because of your budget cuts? What do you say to Ontarians who now find themselves with four more alleged criminals in their midst?

**Hon Mr Harnick:** When you were the government, you put 50% more funds into the criminal justice system, and 70,000 cases got thrown out of the system. You don't understand that throwing money at problems doesn't solve the problems. You deal with input, you deal with managing the system; you don't throw money at it. That's the Liberal way, that's the old way to do things; we don't do that in Ontario any more. We fix it so it's fixed properly.

We started to do that today. We announced a consolidation of courts today that will make more criminal courts available. We are spending money in priority areas. We're doing everything but reducing funding in criminal areas. We've announced \$90 million worth of expenditures for courthouses in the last three weeks, for victims' services. We're developing proper techniques to deal with the input of cases. We're not doing what you did, that caused 70,000 cases to be thrown out. We're going to deal with the problem and find permanent solutions.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** New question.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** I'd say to the Attorney General that the only permanent result we've seen is more criminals out on the street.

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#### NORTHERN AIR SERVICE

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** My question is to the Premier, and it concerns air service for northern Ontario. Earlier this year when your government killed norOntair, you said that the private sector would pick up the service and everything would be fine. We said that the private sector would only be there for a while and then it would exit. We asked you to look at allowing the employees to buy norOntair and allowing the employees to operate it. Your government said no. You sold the planes, you sold the assets, you put the employees out of work. You abandoned the service to northern Ontario.



Now what do we see? Air Creebec has pulled out of Kirkland Lake and Earleton; Bearskin Airlines announced it's pulling out of Elliot Lake; Commercial Aviation is pulling out of Hearst, leaving all those communities without air service.

Premier, I wonder if you could tell us and tell the people in northern Ontario how your government's policy of privatization is improving their air service and improving their lives.

**Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier):** Clearly there are some routes in northern Ontario that the private sector have had difficulty making money in, and then there are others they can serve quite well. During the transition from a totally government-run and -subsidized — and in order to reduce the subsidy actually out there, using government tax dollars to compete, thereby wasting those dollars as far as air service was concerned, was the status quo.

The transition to a private sector system will take a little bit of time, which is why we've offered to mitigate in those cases where there is legitimate lack of competition or service by the private sector, and clearly everything will be fine.

Our commitment is to provide air service to those communities in northern Ontario. You would know that there were a couple of communities that lost their service that you wouldn't even restore it to because it was so expensive. By channelling the resources into those areas — and obviously we're going to have to look at where the private sector is saying, "We can't make a buck; there's not enough traffic." We'll have to look in those areas, and that is exactly what we are doing.

I can assure all the members from northern Ontario that we will be able to do it more efficiently and at less cost to taxpayers and still ensure air service in northern Ontario.

**Mr Hampton:** Maybe the Premier has forgotten this, but the principle that norOntair worked on was this: There were some routes you could make money on. There were other routes in other communities you couldn't make money on. What norOntair tried to do was to offer services for all and basically cover the costs.

The Premier said he didn't want that. His minister for northern development said, "No, we don't want that." What's happening is that a whole bunch of communities no longer have service. What's going to happen if that situation continues is they are going to lose their airport service altogether, which means they start losing things like air ambulance, which affects health care.

I want to ask the Premier: In view of the fact that your great privatization experiment hasn't worked — all it's done is resulted in a whole bunch of people losing their jobs and a whole bunch of people losing their air service — what are you going to do to fix the mess you've created now across northern Ontario in terms of air service?

**Hon Mr Harris:** Our commitment is that those communities in northern Ontario, including Kirkland Lake and Earleton, will have air service. As you know, we're working with the communities now where the current carrier says they're having difficulty. There may

be other carriers; I want to assure you of that. But if we take your position and just automatically subsidize right off, then we're not sure we get the most efficient use of tax dollars.

As you know, we've used government aircraft to provide interim service in a number of areas. I want to assure you that with the millions of dollars we saved by getting out of the lucrative routes and not having to provide subsidized service from some of those areas that didn't need any subsidy, we have more than enough dollars to make sure that we can subsidize, if we have to, those other areas.

## VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

**Mr Jim Brown (Scarborough West):** My question is to the Minister of Education and Training. I thank you for your response the other day regarding gang violence in schools. However, I do have a couple of other concerns regarding school safety.

A student in my area who had a prior history of behavioural problems broke the arm of a younger pupil in the school yard. The school principal, having attempted to move this student to a special, more supervised class, could not get parental agreement for the move. The principal had to have an IPRC review. The principal expressed grave concerns to me over the slowness of the identification and placement review committee process.

I know that violent incidents involving exceptional students are rare. However, what assurance can I give to students, parents and staff in my area that situations like this will not be repeated?

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Education and Training):** I know that we all regret when any child in our school system is injured, and I think everyone in the chamber today would agree with me it's the first responsibility of our school system and all connected to it to make sure that children are safe and children can avoid injury.

After extensive consultation, we are revising regulation 305, which is the identification and placement review committees that were referred to earlier that make the decisions and determinations on children with special needs. Included in these revisions will be clearer definitions of time lines, which I think will address the concern of the honourable member. The Advisory Council on Special Education reviewed the drafts of these regulatory changes and has made some revisions which I think improve them. So that is coming forward now to address the very concerns the member has raised today.

**Mr Jim Brown:** A supplementary to the minister of education on a related topic: A number of young people convicted under the Young Offenders Act are required to attend school as a condition of their release. In the past, teachers with such students in their classroom were not only kept in the dark as to the identity of the young offender, but were unaware of sentencing conditions established by the court or even to whom they would report any infraction like truancy.

Minister, what response can I give to those who say we are putting staff and students in an impossible situation by keeping them in the dark about the history and



circumstances of young offenders placed in our province's classrooms?

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Snobelen:** I know there are members opposite who apparently don't consider violence in schools to be an urgent or critical issue, but I can assure you it's an issue that's of concern to our government. As I'm sure the honourable member knows, there have been violence-free school policies in place for schools since 1994, and these are under ongoing revision to address problems as they are created in different school environments and to take a very constructive approach to ending school violence.

I recently attended a conference designed to involve students in the reporting of violence and crime in schools, to work with the police authorities and the teachers involved.

I'd like to advise the honourable member that in February 1995 there were amendments made to the Young Offenders Act that will allow school boards to access the records of young offenders where that's appropriate to protect the safety of all the people involved in the school system. We're looking forward to more involvement of students and parent councils in the upcoming years to make sure our schools are a safe environment to learn.

#### TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South):** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Tens of thousands of Ontarians are becoming painfully aware that driver exam centres are being closed in their area. Hamilton, Welland, Niagara Falls, Leamington, Cambridge, Trenton, Port Hope, all of these places are having their driver exam centres closed. Over the past two weeks I've sent you hundreds of letters and petitions with regard, as an example, to the driver exam centre in Leamington. In fact, for the folks from Pelee Island, it would take them all day to get an examination if they had to go to Windsor, because they have to come over on the boat and drive to Windsor and back.

Minister, is your decision to close these centres final?

**Hon Al Palladini (Minister of Transportation):** I think it's an excellent question and certainly one that has to be addressed. I would like to answer you in this manner: The ministry's main objective is to reduce costs while maintaining our licence services and actually improving on front-line delivery. Restructuring is consistent with our government's objective to ensure public services are delivered in a customer-friendly and most cost-efficient way.

One of the things that was the parameter, I guess, that made us take a look at how we can do the closures without affecting front-line delivery of services in smaller communities is we took a look at a parameter of around 45 to 50 or 55 kilometres. This is the guide that we took a look at.

In terms of the question the member is asking — has a decision been made, have we finalized it? — no, we have not really finalized it. We are going to take a look at it to make sure that we are going to do the right thing.

We certainly want to make sure that the services to Ontarians are going to be delivered in a customer-friendly way, but again, keeping cost-effectiveness in mind.

**1500**

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Supplementary.

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** The question is to the Minister of Transportation. In a statement yesterday, I again outlined to the House the dangers inherent to and with Highway 69. We are entering into the Canada Day long weekend, a time of danger for all drivers using Highway 69.

Minister, at a meeting held on May 29 in your office, with your staff, the region of Sudbury staff, the regional chair, Councillor Jim Ilnitski and myself, you committed to making an announcement with regard to the environmental assessment between French River and Sudbury within the next short while.

For the record, to ease the fears and to give hope to those people who will be travelling on Highway 69 this weekend, can you inform the House and the region of Sudbury what you have decided to do with regard to that portion of highway between Sudbury and French River?

**Hon Mr Palladini:** I'd like to thank the member for the question. I thought we had a very productive meeting with the people from Sudbury. I certainly tried to reiterate our government's position based on priorities. Highway 69 is a major highway in the province of Ontario and it is one that we are going to be addressing.

As far as the four-laning of Highway 69, I believe we've already invested somewhere in the vicinity of \$60 million in four-laning certain areas of it, and we are going to continue to do that. We are committed to taking a look at how we can deliver the four-laning, if necessary. There are alternatives.

As far as the environmental assessment that the member has asked about, again I thought the meeting was somewhat positive in our intention of revisiting the environmental assessment to see if we can bring it back on board and scatter it over a period of two or three years. I want to tell the member that it's being looked at.

**The Speaker:** We have two deferred votes that were carried over from the sitting yesterday.

#### PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

**Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River):** Speaker, on a point of order: We understood yesterday from the government House leader that the Legislative Assembly committee was going to sit today to examine some of the issues around why people who work in the dining room and the cafeteria here are having their wages reduced from \$15, \$16 an hour down to \$7 and \$8 an hour, and we've just been informed now by the government House leader that that is not the case.

Since it did create a great deal of frustration and anger in this place yesterday, I wonder if we could have some explanation as to what has happened. It was our understanding yesterday, as I'm sure it was your understanding, that the Legislative Assembly committee was going to sit; that you were going to come and you were going to establish for the record what has happened, how it has



happened, the background behind the loss of jobs and so on. I wonder if we can have some explanation before the Premier leaves on what's happened.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** I haven't got an explanation. Perhaps the House leader may have one, but I haven't.

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader):** Mr Speaker, on the same point of order: We did indicate to the third party House leader yesterday that we indeed were prepared to look at the Legislative Assembly committee looking at this issue. However, as you well know, this is an issue within the purview of the Board of Internal Economy, and of course the third party, as indeed the official opposition does, has a member on that particular board. We do not see any need for a Legislative Assembly committee to look at making decisions that are within the purview of the Board of Internal Economy. I might point out the leader of the third party that his own member on the Board of Internal Economy seconded the motion on February 29 this year to issue a request for proposals with respect to the dining room and cafeteria staff.

Mr Speaker, this matter is entirely, as you know, within the purview of the Board of Internal Economy. They have made a decision on this matter, and that is where it should rest.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** To this point, Speaker: We sat in this House yesterday and listened to commitments being made by the government. Thousands of people — wait a minute, Speaker — across the province heard the very same thing, that the crisis that was generated yesterday by the job loss for 22 hardworking women and men was going to be addressed because of the government's promise to have the Legislative Assembly committee meet this afternoon. You, Speaker, as you will recall, volunteered to attend if called upon, and it was indicated you would be.

Downstairs in this building, 22 working women and men are counting on the government to keep its promise. Thousands of people across Ontario who heard that promise being made are counting on this government to keep its promise. This is either a serious breach of the government's responsibility to uphold the position that it took in the first place or else the government never meant what it said when it said what it said yesterday, and you know what it's called then. To call it what it ought to be called would be unparliamentary. This is a serious affront.

**The Speaker:** Order. I've heard the member's point of order. He does not have a point of order. We'll proceed with the business of the House, and the business of the House is deferred votes. We'll have two deferred votes.

**Mr Kormos:** Speaker, on a point of privilege —

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** On a point of privilege, Speaker: Read the standing orders.

**The Speaker:** I've heard your point of order. I've heard it and —

**Mr Kormos:** Now I've got a point of privilege, Speaker.

**The Speaker:** No. I've heard your point of privilege and your point of order. There's no point of privilege.

**Mr Kormos:** Get out of the back pocket of the government. Get out of their back pocket for once.

**The Speaker:** Order. The member take his seat. I've heard your point of order. You do not have a point of order.

**Mr Kormos:** On a point of privilege, Speaker: Wow, it's not a two by four; it's a two by eight. I've got to tell you, as a matter of privilege, I relied upon the government's promise yesterday to permit a sitting of the Legislative Assembly committee so that I could attend and exercise my rights as a —

**The Speaker:** Order. If your privileges have been —  
*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order.

MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1996  
LOI DE 1996 MODIFIANT DES LOIS  
EN CE QUI CONCERNE  
LE MINISTÈRE DES RICHESSES NATURELLES

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 36, An Act to amend certain acts administered by the Ministry of Natural Resources / Projet de loi 36, Loi modifiant certaines lois appliquées par le ministère des Richesses naturelles.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** There will be a five-minute bell. Call in the members.

*The division bells rang from 1509 to 1514.*

**The Speaker:** Will the members take their seats, please. We're dealing with third reading of Bill 36, standing in the name of Mr Hodgson. All those in favour will please rise one at a time until your name is called.

Ayes		
Arnott, Ted	Gilchrist, Steve	Preston, Peter
Baird, John R.	Grimmett, Bill	Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Barrett, Toby	Guzzo, Garry J.	Ross, Lillian
Bassett, Isabel	Hardeman, Ernie	Sampson, Rob
Beaubien, Marcel	Harnick, Charles	Saunderson, William
Boushy, Dave	Harris, Michael D.	Shea, Derwyn
Brown, Jim	Hastings, John	Sheehan, Frank
Carr, Gary	Hudak, Tim	Skarica, Toni
Carroll, Jack	Jackson, Cameron	Smith, Bruce
Chudleigh, Ted	Johnson, Bert	Snobelen, John
Clement, Tony	Johnson, David	Spina, Joseph
Cunningham, Dianne	Johnson, Ron	Sterling, Norman W.
Danford, Harry	Jordan, W. Leo	Stewart, R. Gary
DeFaria, Carl	Klees, Frank	Tascona, Joseph N.
Doyle, Ed	Leach, Al	Tilson, David
Ecker, Janet	Marland, Margaret	Tsubouchi, David H.
Elliott, Brenda	Martiniuk, Gerry	Turnbull, David
Eves, Ernie L.	Maves, Bart	Vankoughnet, Bill
Fisher, Barbara	Munro, Julia	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Ford, Douglas B.	Newman, Dan	Witmer, Elizabeth
Fox, Gary	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Wood, Bob
Froese, Tom	Palladini, Al	Young, Terence H.
Galt, Doug	Parker, John L.	

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one at a time.



**Nays**

Bartolucci, Rick	Gravelle, Michael	Morin, Gilles E.
Bisson, Gilles	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Bradley, James J.	Kennedy, Gerard	Pouliot, Gilles
Caplan, Elinor	Kormos, Peter	Pupatello, Sandra
Christopherson, David	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Churley, Marilyn	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sergio, Mario
Colle, Mike	Lankin, Frances	Silipo, Tony
Conway, Sean G.	Laughren, Floyd	Wood, Len
Crozier, Bruce	Marchese, Rosario	
Curling, Alvin	McGuinty, Dalton	

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 68; the nays are 28.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE,  
FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS  
STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1996  
LOI DE 1996 MODIFIANT DES LOIS  
EN CE QUI CONCERNE  
LE MINISTÈRE DE L'AGRICULTURE,  
DE L'ALIMENTATION  
ET DES AFFAIRES RURALES

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 46, An Act to amend or revoke various statutes administered by or affecting the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and to enact other statutes administered by the Ministry / *Projet de loi 46, Loi modifiant ou abrogeant diverses lois appliquées par le ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ou qui touchent ce ministère, et visant à édicter d'autres lois appliquées par le ministère.*

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Same vote? No? There will be a five-minute bell. Call in the members.

*The division bells rang from 1517 to 1522.*

**The Speaker:** Third reading of Bill 46, standing in the name of Mr Villeneuve. All those in favour will please rise one at a time.

**Ayes**

Arnott, Ted	Grimmett, Bill	Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Baird, John R.	Guzzo, Garry J.	Ross, Lillian
Barrett, Toby	Hardeman, Ernie	Sampson, Rob
Bassett, Isabel	Harnick, Charles	Saunderson, William
Beaubien, Marcel	Harris, Michael D.	Shea, Derwyn
Boushy, Dave	Hastings, John	Sheehan, Frank
Brown, Jim	Hudak, Tim	Skarica, Toni
Carr, Gary	Jackson, Cameron	Smith, Bruce
Carroll, Jack	Johnson, Bert	Snobelen, John
Chudleigh, Ted	Johnson, David	Spina, Joseph
Clement, Tony	Johnson, Ron	Sterling, Norman W.
Cunningham, Dianne	Jordan, W. Leo	Stewart, R. Gary
Danford, Harry	Klees, Frank	Stockwell, Chris

DeFaria, Carl	Leach, Al	Tascona, Joseph N.
Doyle, Ed	Marland, Margaret	Tilson, David
Ecker, Janet	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tsubouchi, David H.
Elliott, Brenda	Maves, Bart	Turnbull, David
Eves, Ernie L.	Munro, Julia	Vankoughnet, Bill
Fisher, Barbara	Murdoch, Bill	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Ford, Douglas B.	Newman, Dan	Witmer, Elizabeth
Fox, Gary	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Wood, Bob
Froese, Tom	Palladini, Al	Young, Terence H.
Galt, Doug	Parker, John L.	
Gilchrist, Steve	Preston, Peter	

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one at a time.

**Nays**

Bartolucci, Rick	Hoy, Pat	Morin, Gilles E.
Bisson, Gilles	Kennedy, Gerard	Phillips, Gerry
Bradley, James J.	Kormos, Peter	Pouliot, Gilles
Caplan, Elinor	Kwinter, Monte	Pupatello, Sandra
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Crozier, Bruce	Marchese, Rosario	Wood, Len
Curling, Alvin	Martel, Shelley	
Gravelle, Michael	McGuinty, Dalton	

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 70; the nays are 28.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

**PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE**

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: I rose yesterday on a matter of privilege and asked you to do what you could to ensure that my rights were protected. I believe you did that as best you could, because certainly ultimately the government House leader announced that they indeed would hold Legislative Assembly committee hearings today on the issue that we raised, my colleagues and I. Now, of course, the government has betrayed that understanding because we stopped raising a fuss here yesterday when we had that assurance and commitment from the government. Now we find the government has reneged on that promise and said, "No, we're not going to have it," and obviously they're trying to steamroller through to get through to the last hours of today, because then the session's gone.

Speaker, I return to you once again, sir. It's a matter of privilege of the members of the opposition to have an opportunity to question these government policies. You now have, Speaker, the added problem that you have a House that is divided because this government has turned their back and reneged on a deal. Let's not lose sight — this is all about those workers downstairs who are being shafted, Speaker. I ask you again, please take a recess, meet with the table officers, ask the government again. Point out that they control the Board of Internal Economy. For God's sake, Speaker, do something. This



government is steamrolling our rights, and I'm asking you to protect them.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** The member does not have a point of privilege. We dealt with the issue yesterday. I made a ruling on it, and we cannot continue on the same points of order when I've already made my ruling on that very issue.

**Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine):** You ruled on it and the government committed itself to leg assembly meeting. Now today they are saying no, they are changing their position.

**The Speaker:** If the House leaders want to meet to come to some decision, that will be up to the House leaders. It's not up to me.

**Ms Lankin:** You call them together, Mr Speaker. You call the leaders together.

**The Speaker:** New order of business.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: There are two points of privilege that I want to make that are interconnected. You would know that yesterday there was very vociferous discussion in this House in regard to what is happening with the food workers in this Legislature. Yesterday afternoon, prior to question period, I tried on a number of occasions to be recognized by you, as the Speaker of this assembly, to rise on a point of privilege that I thought was happening in regard to my rights and the rights of other members in this assembly, both in regard to the government's actions and the actions that you took yesterday as Speaker.

I review the Hansard. Just so we know what happened here, up to the point of, "I rise on a point of privilege," I had not interjected in this House — or Hansard never recorded any interjections on my point — and I had been watching and listening to the debate up to that point fairly quietly. I rose on a point of privilege, and on the point of privilege when I rose I was received by the Speaker by being named and being asked to leave the chamber.

Further, the member for Welland-Thorold tried to get up on a point of privilege again this afternoon and you would not recognize the member for Welland-Thorold on his point of privilege. Speaker, I know you know these standing orders well, but I draw your attention to them all the same. Under standing order 21(a) it says, "Privileges are the rights enjoyed by the House collectively and by the members of the House individually conferred by the Legislative Assembly Act and other statutes, or by practice, precedent, usage and custom"; and it says under 21(b), "Whenever a matter of privilege arises, it shall be taken into consideration immediately."

1530

On a number of occasions in this House I have risen on a matter of privilege, the member for Welland-Thorold has risen on a point of privilege and you, Speaker, have not deemed it appropriate to recognize those members on a point of privilege. I think it is your responsibility to first hear the point of privilege, as spelled out in the standing orders, and if you feel that the point of privilege is not warranted, then you ask the member to sit down.

I ask you two things, Speaker. First of all, I ask that you take a look at the question of the government not

giving us, as opposition members and other members of this assembly, the right to bring public the matters that are before the House today in regard to the cafeteria workers; but more important and equal to that are the rights of us as members. When I stand in this House I'm here to represent the constituents of my riding —

**The Speaker:** Order. When the Speaker stands, the members are to take their seats. Yesterday that was not the case. There was a problem yesterday. The member would continuously stand and not take his seat, and therefore he was named.

Points of privilege in this House should be short and to the point. If any member has a point of personal privilege — points of order are different, I understand that, but if your rights are being infringed on a point of personal privilege, then I'd like to see it in writing if it's possible, and if not that, with a very short statement.

**Mr Bisson:** On a point of privilege, Speaker —

**The Speaker:** I've heard your point of privilege. You went on and on.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** Sit down and listen to him.

**The Speaker:** The member does not have a point of privilege. I have heard it and he does not have a point.

**Mr Bisson:** Speaker, you haven't heard it.

**The Speaker:** Would the member take his seat, please. The member does not have a point of personal privilege. His privileges in this House are not being infringed upon as far as I can see. We'll go on to the next order of business.

**M. Gilles Pouliot (Lac-Nipigon) :** Une question de privilège, Monsieur le Président : Je voudrais avec grand respect attirer votre attention sur l'article 21 à la page 14 du Règlement, qui se lit comme suit :

«(a) Les privilèges sont les droits dont jouissent les membres de l'Assemblée législative, collectivement et individuellement, en vertu de la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative et d'autres lois, ou en vertu de la pratique, des précédents et des usages.

«(b) Quand la question de privilège est posée, elle est immédiatement prise en considération.»

Those are my privileges as a member, Mr Speaker.

Yesterday, the government, the official opposition and the third party reached an agreement that a certain order of business would take place. As a member, I am planning meticulously and I need your help —

**The Speaker:** Order. The member take his seat, please. I've heard your point of privilege. You're reading the rules to me. I don't think that's in order. I think we know what the rules are. Will the member take his seat.

**Mr Pouliot:** I don't know how to play games, sir. I'm asking for your advice.

**The Speaker:** Order. Will the member take his seat. The next item of business is motions.

**Mr Bisson:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: It says in the standing orders that whenever a member rises on a point of privilege it shall be taken immediately into consideration. Yesterday, I explained to you what happened — one second, Speaker. Let me finish what I'm about to say. When I went to speak to you just shortly, a little while ago, to discuss this matter privately with you, when I asked you, "What does it take for the Speaker to



recognize a member on a point of privilege?" you said, "Take it up with our House leaders." I ask you, is it the House leaders or is the Speaker who is responsible for interpreting the rules of this House?

**The Speaker:** Order. I suggest you should have a chat with the Clerk with regard to the rule for the order. It says if a matter of privilege arises, it is to be taken up immediately. There has not been a matter of privilege that has arisen.

The next item of business is petitions.

## PETITIONS

### DELLCREST CHILDREN'S CENTRE

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale):** Mr Speaker, I appreciate that you recognize the seriousness of this petition which comes from the residents of Parkdale. It reads:

"Whereas the Dellcrest Children's Centre is planning to open a 10-bed open custody residence for troubled children...in south Parkdale; and

"Whereas the residence is an inappropriate site for the rehabilitation of troubled children because it is within walking distance to illicit drug and prostitution activities; a large number of unsupervised and supervised rooming houses that are home to ex-psychiatric patients, parolees and our society's most vulnerable and ostracized members; and a number of licensed establishments that have been charged with various liquor infractions; and

"Whereas the Ministry of Correctional Services and the Dellcrest Children's Centre have decided not to hold open discussions with our community prior to the purchase of this house; and

"Whereas the decision to relocate also expresses a total lack of disregard towards our community's consistent and well-documented wishes for the Ontario government to stop the creation or relocation of additional social service programs...in an area that is already oversaturated with health and social services...;

"We, the undersigned, urge the Ministry of the Solicitor General and Correctional Services to suspend plans to relocate this open custody residence until a full review of the Dellcrest Children's Centre's decision can be conducted, and explore, with us, alternative locations...."

I have signed my name to this document.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Further petitions? The Chair recognizes the member for Hamilton Centre.

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre):** Mr Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it the wish of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members.

*The division bells rang from 1538 to 1608.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Mr Christopherson has moved adjournment of the House.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 8; the nays are 71.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

The Chair recognizes the member for York Mills.

**Mr David Turnbull (York Mills):** Mr Speaker, I move that we now proceed to introduction of bills.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it the wish of the House that Mr Turnbull's motion to move to introduction of bills carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members.

*The division bells rang from 1611 to 1641.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Mr Turnbull has moved that we move to the introduction of bills.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

**Clerk of the House:** The ayes are 58; the nays are 15.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### COURTS IMPROVEMENT ACT, 1996

#### LOI DE 1996

#### SUR L'AMÉLIORATION DES TRIBUNAUX

Mr Eves, on behalf of Mr Harnick, moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 79, An Act to improve Ontario's court system, to respond to concerns raised by charities and their volunteers and to improve various statutes relating to the administration of justice / Projet de loi 79, Loi visant à améliorer le système judiciaire de l'Ontario, à répondre aux préoccupations exprimées par les oeuvres de bienfaisance et leurs bénévoles, et à améliorer diverses lois relatives à l'administration de la justice.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. There will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1644 to 1649.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Will the members please take their seats.

All those in favour, please rise one at a time.

#### Ayes

Baird, John R.	Galt, Doug	Pupatello, Sandra
Barrett, Toby	Gilchrist, Steve	Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Bartolucci, Rick	Grimmett, Bill	Ross, Lillian
Beaubien, Marcel	Guzzo, Garry J.	Ruprecht, Tony
Bisson, Gilles	Hastings, John	Sampson, Rob
Boushy, Dave	Hudak, Tim	Saunderson, William
Bradley, James J.	Johnson, David	Sergio, Mario
Brown, Jim	Johnson, Ron	Shea, Derwyn
Caplan, Elinor	Jordan, W. Leo	Sheehan, Frank
Carr, Gary	Kennedy, Gerard	Silipo, Tony
Carroll, Jack	Kormos, Peter	Skarica, Toni



Christopherson, David	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Smith, Bruce
Chudleigh, Ted	Leach, Al	Snobelen, John
Churley, Marilyn	Marchese, Rosario	Spina, Joseph
Clement, Tony	Marland, Margaret	Sterling, Norman W.
Colle, Mike	Martel, Shelley	Stewart, R. Gary
Cunningham, Dianne	Martiniuk, Gerry	Stockwell, Chris
Danford, Harry	Maves, Bart	Tascona, Joseph N.
DeFaria, Carl	Munro, Julia	Tilson, David
Doyle, Ed	Murdoch, Bill	Turnbull, David
Ecker, Janet	Newman, Dan	Vankoughnet, Bill
Elliott, Brenda	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Eves, Ernie L.	Parker, John L.	Wood, Bob
Fisher, Barbara	Phillips, Gerry	Wood, Len
Ford, Douglas B.	Pouliot, Gilles	Young, Terence H.
Froese, Tom	Preston, Peter	

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 77; the nays are 0.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

JUVENILE DELINQUENTS ACT  
(ONTARIO), 1996  
LOI DE 1996 SUR LES JEUNES  
DÉLINQUANTS (ONTARIO)

Mr Jim Brown moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 80, An Act to curtail Repeat Offences by Juvenile Delinquents / Projet de loi 80, Loi visant à inciter les jeunes délinquants à ne pas récidiver.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** It is the wish of this House that this motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

Those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

There will be a five-minute bell. Please call in the members.

*The division bells rang from 1653 to 1658.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those in favour, please rise one at a time.

Ayes		
Baird, John R.	Gilchrist, Steve	Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Barrett, Toby	Grimmett, Bill	Ross, Lillian
Beaubien, Marcel	Guzzo, Garry J.	Ruprecht, Tony
Boushy, Dave	Hardeman, Ernie	Sampson, Rob
Bradley, James J.	Hastings, John	Saunderson, William
Brown, Jim	Hudak, Tim	Sergio, Mario
Caplan, Elinor	Johnson, David	Shea, Derwyn
Carr, Gary	Johnson, Ron	Sheehan, Frank
Carroll, Jack	Jordan, W. Leo	Skarica, Toni
Chudleigh, Ted	Kells, Morley	Smith, Bruce
Clement, Tony	Kennedy, Gerard	Snobelen, John
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Spina, Joseph
Cunningham, Dianne	Leach, Al	Sterling, Norman W.
Danford, Harry	Marland, Margaret	Stewart, R. Gary
DeFaria, Carl	Martiniuk, Gerry	Stockwell, Chris
Doyle, Ed	Maves, Bart	Tascona, Joseph N.
Ecker, Janet	Munro, Julia	Tilson, David
Elliott, Brenda	Murdoch, Bill	Turnbull, David
Eves, Ernie L.	Newman, Dan	Vankoughnet, Bill
Fisher, Barbara	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Ford, Douglas B.	Parker, John L.	Wood, Bob
Fox, Gary	Phillips, Gerry	Young, Terence H.
Froese, Tom	Preston, Peter	
Galt, Doug	Pupatello, Sandra	

**The Deputy Speaker:** Those opposed, please rise one at a time.

Nays		
Bisson, Gilles	Marchese, Rosario	Silipo, Tony
Christopherson, David	Martel, Shelley	
Kormos, Peter	Pouliot, Gilles	

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 70; the nays are 7.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

*Report continues in volume B.*

ERRATA

No.	Page	Column	Line(s)	Should read:
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	4005	2	44-5	
95A	4006	2	14	the seniors who was there was Shirley Watters, a senior



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First Session, 36th Parliament

## Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Première session, 36<sup>e</sup> législature

# Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

# Journal des débats (Hansard)

Thursday 27 June 1996

Jeudi 27 juin 1996



Speaker  
Honourable Allan K. McLean

Président  
L'honorable Allan K. McLean

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# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 27 June 1996

# ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 27 juin 1996

*Report continued from volume A.*

1700

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### TAX CUT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH ACT, 1996 LOI DE 1996 SUR LA RÉDUCTION D'IMPÔTS ET LA CROISSANCE ÉCONOMIQUE

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for third reading of Bill 47, An Act to cut taxes, to stimulate economic growth and to implement other measures contained in the 1996 Budget / Projet de loi 47, Loi visant à réduire les impôts, à stimuler la croissance économique et à mettre en oeuvre d'autres mesures mentionnées dans le budget de 1996.

**Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich):** I'm very happy to continue debate on this budget bill and I hope somehow we can get the members opposite revved up to the point we had before lunch today.

In any event, we were talking earlier about portables in schools and relating that to the budget bill. I will digress just for a moment to speak to the constituents in Windsor-Sandwich and tell them that I would like to bring forward the thoughts I got from them during my latest canvassing expedition in the riding of Windsor-Sandwich and express to the House the concerns they've had so far relating to this government's budget.

The government certainly is driven by an economic agenda of finding cuts because it needs to finance a tax cut. What has that affected in the riding I come from? It's affected health care, it's affected education, it will affect roads, and there are a number of other areas. Today, of course, we're reminded by the Attorney General how bad the crime issue is across Ontario, and I'd like to speak to that as well.

To reiterate, if we speak about education and what is happening, we have to remember that the Conservative government was elected on a platform that cuts to education would not affect the classroom. What's happened is that they are affecting classrooms across Ontario, and one small area of this in terms of what policies the government has come forward with is the moratorium on capital expansions in schools across Ontario. The school boards across Ontario have been put in the position of having to deal with the moratorium on capital expense, and in some areas, in particular high-growth areas, they've been severely affected by, firstly, the significant cuts to their school board and, secondly, the moratorium on capital. What it's forced them to do in many instances is go out and make huge purchases of hundreds of thousands of

dollars in portables in which to put more students, because these places are in high-growth areas.

I gave some examples earlier. It was actually surprising to see that in the Minister of Education's own riding, his own backyard, the Dufferin-Peel Catholic board has 1,016 portables that he deals with; here in Metropolitan Toronto, the separate school board dealing with 820 portables; the Peel Board of Education, 659 portables; York region, 789 — and the list goes on. The most impressive figure, I guess, from all this is that the total number of portables in Ontario is now on an increase thanks to the moratorium on capital expense, the total in Ontario being 11,738. That is a lot, hundreds of thousands of dollars that school boards are being forced to spend only to have to, further down the road, spend the money again and build the schools in those high-growth areas.

If we speak to our good member for Nepean, he will tell us as well that he's had to have town hall meetings on education, town hall meetings with parents and teachers and school boards, because there are two high schools that were given approvals that should have been built, because the growth is unbelievable in that Nepean area, but they've been put on hold. Yes, they have portables in Nepean. How does the member for Nepean deal with it? He doesn't have an answer for the people.

I submit that it's a lot like driving your car. If you don't change the oil when you're supposed to, eventually you'll ruin the engine. I give you that example, having experienced that personally. My husband would be pleased to hear that I've admitted that.

In any event, we've got to say that where the boards of education are concerned, in particular the Essex county Catholic school board — they've just recently approved a \$200,000 expense for a portable at Sacred Heart / Sacré-Coeur school. They know that they'll eventually have a school built there. They have to. They have some 500 students attending — 250 inside the school; 220 outside the school. The situation is just ridiculous.

That is just one reason that I've got to say the budget really isn't appropriate for what Ontario needs, and it's not appropriate for what Ontarians expected from the government when it was elected on the promise of no cuts to education that affect the classroom.

They were also elected on no cuts to health care. I mentioned earlier that we would be having cuts to health care, and we're feeling them already. The nurses in my riding who are now on the street thanks to the changes at local levels in hospitals are indicative of cuts that are affecting people, and ultimately seniors and children, in the area of Windsor-Sandwich.

I would like to wrap up by saying that we're disappointed so far in the progression of the government and



what it's chosen to do. My people in Windsor-Sandwich feel betrayed by them, and we know that it's only a matter of time before that feeling starts to settle in in all of the areas, including the member for Nepean's.

In any event, thank you. I'll look forward to further debate.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Questions or comments?

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I enjoyed the speech of the member for Windsor-Sandwich very much. She brought to the attention of the House many of the problems that are confronting a lot of communities in Ontario right now, particularly with the freeze we have on the capital expenditures right across the province, even in areas where there's a dire need for those capital expenditures to be made.

We can certainly understand that there would be some postponements. That's acceptable; that's what we would expect is going to happen. But in this case she has a dire circumstance facing her in LaSalle. I certainly am glad she was able to share that with the House.

Another problem she mentioned was the manner in which obstetricians have been treated in the province. Certainly in the Niagara region, obstetricians have been quite unhappy with their treatment by the provincial government, and as a result we have a diminished number of individuals who will be delivering babies in the Niagara region. Family physicians have not shown enthusiasm for this, particularly in light of the fact that we have premiums for malpractice insurance that are very high.

1710

While the minister moved partway to solve this problem, it's my understanding from further discussions with obstetricians in our part of the province that they are still unhappy with the Minister of Health and the general policy of the government as it relates to the treatment of members of the medical profession. I hope the government will review its policies in this regard and endeavour to come to an amicable and mutually acceptable agreement with members of the medical profession who for so long have delivered services in such an exemplary fashion in Ontario.

**Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood):** The member for Windsor-Sandwich talked about the impact of this government on her own community and on education, to the point where young children cannot get proper accommodation in terms of their educational facilities. They can see the impact in real terms on the classroom physically and in terms of instruction.

In my own community in Metro, what really concerns us is that this government has also passed a bill, Bill 34, which is going to take up to \$65 million of property taxes right out of Metro. This is \$65 million that would have gone to the schools in Metro.

**Mr Bradley:** Does that include Etobicoke?

**Mr Colle:** This means Etobicoke, Scarborough, York, East York, North York and Toronto. It's the first time in the history of this province that a provincial government has gone into the property tax base to pay for the mistakes and cutbacks they've made in education.

All the teachers and school boards and parents and students across Metro are concerned about what's going

to happen to their schools as a result of the tax grab the provincial government has undertaken. Just like our confrère here in Windsor-Sandwich is worried about what kinds of schools we're going to have for children in LaSalle, people right across Metro wonder how much money they'll have for their school system when this government is going to take — who knows? — \$65 million-plus out of the schools, out of Metro without any kind of assent. It's a grab right out of the property tax which supposedly is to be used for local purposes. What are they doing with that \$65 million? They're taking it out of Metro.

**Mrs Pupatello:** In wrapping up I congratulate the Waterloo Region Roman Catholic Separate School Board because they announced that they have found financing and they're doing a private investment to build a school in Waterloo. The question we have to ask the ministry is, why is it good that today Waterloo will be able to build the school they're looking for, but we can't build the schools we need in other places, especially in fast-growing places across Ontario?

We congratulate Waterloo on some exceptional work. They've resorted to putting together a consortium, the Infrastructure Capital Corp, to build St Benedict's school under a leaseback arrangement. While the minister concedes this is the type of financing that happens in other jurisdictions, I suggest that the minister look in his own province, where he is the Minister of Education, to see that there are some very good examples of financial arrangements happening right here. All we can say is, make sure that the private developers who are involved in these kinds of deals are not making more money than would have been the case if the provincial government were borrowing the funding to finance the building of the school.

We congratulate Waterloo. Perhaps it's because Waterloo has a cabinet minister in the area that they managed to escape the moratorium on capital, but the needs are no greater in Waterloo than they are in LaSalle or Nepean.

Having said that, again to the people of Windsor-Sandwich, the Liberal Party will continue to speak out on issues that affect us every day and the government is going to have to be accountable for all its actions.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley):** Further debate?

**Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott and Russell):** I'm really disappointed with the content of Bill 47.

Je suis vraiment déçu et inquiet du contenu du projet de loi. Les conséquences se feront sentir dans nos familles. Nos familles, nos étudiants, nos garderies vont vraiment en souffrir.

Our day care centres won't be able to operate because at the present time low-income families won't be able to afford to send their children to day care. In turn, even the people who are well off won't be able to have day care services because they won't be in existence any more in rural areas.

Our senior people are going to be affected. Our municipalities are getting a cut of 40%. This would mean in my own region alone, in the riding of Prescott and Russell, there's a reduction of \$6 million in transfers.



Libraries are going to be affected; recreation centres and cultural centres are affected.

Everybody is in agreement to reduce the deficit. At the present time we're trying to reduce the deficit on the backs of poor people.

La réduction du déficit, tout le monde est d'accord dans le moment. Mais le fait que nous essayons de réduire les impôts en même temps, c'est une chose qui ne se fait pas. Actuellement, nous allons prendre les argents des pauvres pour bénéficier le retour d'impôts des personnes qui ont les moyens.

Even though the deficit at the present time is \$89 billion, in the year 2000 it will reach either \$117 billion or \$119 billion.

Municipalities are going to be hit with police services which will in turn have user fees. We had the experience in Ottawa.

La police d'Ottawa a demandé un montant de 15 000 \$ pour poursuivre une enquête qui a été débutée. Sans ce 15 000 \$, on ne pouvait pas continuer avec l'étude qu'il a fallu faire, ou les recherches.

This bill forced the cutting of some programs. The new ventures loan program was cut completely. This gave people a chance to start new businesses. I have a person in Cumberland by the name of Tim McNeely who was registered and had received the okay from the bank; he went to take a course at Algonquin College. On March 21, 1996, he was advised by the bank that the loan was not available any more. This loan would permit these people to start a business which would create some employment, but the contents of Bill 47 will eliminate the program that was put in place a few years ago to help start up businesses.

Ce projet de loi n'aidera certainement pas les familles à faible revenu. Si nous regardons à l'intérieur de ce projet de loi-là, ça nous permettra aussi de mettre sur pied les appareils de loterie vidéo. Ces appareils vont prendre l'argent des poches des pauvres pour bénéficier aux riches qui vraiment vont retirer un retour d'impôts additionnels. Je regarde les revenus des personnes de l'Original, de Hawkesbury, de St-Eugène ; le revenu moyen pour une dame dans ce secteur est de l'ordre de 19 000 \$. Ces personnes vont bénéficier d'une réduction d'impôts d'environ 1,25 \$ par semaine. Est-ce que c'est ça vraiment, l'encouragement de mettre sur pied des programmes et retourner les personnes au travail ?

On dit que la réduction d'impôts a été mise sur pied pour créer de l'emploi. Je ne crois pas que ça va créer de l'emploi. Il a été prouvé dans le passé qu'avec cette réduction d'impôts, les personnes vont bénéficier de voyages à l'extérieur du pays. Donc, ça va définitivement améliorer l'économie dans les autres pays et non ici-même au Canada.

1720

Since I'm limited in the time that I have today because some of my colleagues want to speak on that, I'd just like to say that definitely I will be voting against Bill 47 because it gives nothing to poor people in our province and absolutely nothing to the municipalities of Prescott and Russell.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments? Further debate.

**Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt):** I'm pleased to join the debate on Bill 47 and to say to the people of Ontario that the cornerstone of this bill is the cornerstone of the government's fiscal plan, and that is to cut services in the province and then to cut taxes. The plan is to cut provincial income taxes by 30%.

I would say that even many of my Conservative friends, when I say to them, "You realize that this government, over the next four years, is going to increase the debt of the province by \$22 billion," they say, "That can't be; that's impossible."

For every family in the province of Ontario, this government plans to add about \$8,000 of debt to the province's books. It's all spelled out on page 43 in the budget, where the debt will go up by \$22 billion. I might add that over that period of time the interest, just the interest, that the people of Ontario will have to pay on the added debt is \$5 billion. Why is that the case? Why are we going to go out and borrow \$22 billion? It's because a majority, over half, of that increase in the debt is because of the tax cut.

What the government has said to people in Ontario, to teachers, is: "We cannot afford any longer to fund education the way that you might like. We're going to have to cut educational spending."

Two weeks from now seniors in this province in our nursing homes are going to be asked — not asked; told — to pay \$2 for each prescription. By the way, that is completely contradictory to the promises made in their campaign document, the Common Sense Revolution. But seniors are going to have to pay \$2.

I was in a nursing home two nights ago, and there on the desk when I went in was this pamphlet about paying the fee. I gave a little talk, and one of the seniors said: "Listen, Mr Phillips, you're being too kind to the government. You go down there and you tell them what we think about this fee. They promised in the election campaign no new user fees, and July 15 we're facing new user fees."

Our law enforcement organizations right across this province are facing significant cutbacks. Our hospitals: My leader today pointed out that just today at noon there was a directive — and by the way, it wasn't a recommendation of the government; it was a directive from the government — to completely contradict many of the wishes in Thunder Bay around health care.

Why are all those cuts going on? It's because over half of this increase in the debt is to fund the tax cut. The government itself — I always use the government figures so that we don't get into an argument about blah, blah, blah, "You're using this figure" — says the tax cut, in this year's dollars, is \$5 billion. When we talked to the officials and said, "Well, yes, it's \$5 billion right now; what will it be three and four years from now?" they said, "Well, it's substantially higher than that."

So we have this extraordinary fiscal plan where the government says: "We are so desperate to get our fiscal house in order that everybody has got to tighten their belts. We've got to cut our educational spending. Municipalities, we're going to cut your support from the province in half. University students, you're going to have to pay 20% more in tuition fees; come this September, 20%



more. College students, you're going to have to pay 15% more."

Furthermore, you're saying that may not be the end of it. There's going to be more cuts coming.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr Phillips:** Now the member for Nepean is starting to bark, but you made a promise to the students in the campaign: "We will take the cost of education that you pay up to 25%." That was your promise. Well, then you published a document showing the students already are funding more than 25%. Furthermore, you said there will be a "slight increase" in tuition fees. You got a lot of students voting for you.

What happens? The very first time that you have an impact on them, their tuition fee goes up by 20%. And why? It is because this government has decided that it wants to implement a tax cut of 30% that will cost — every penny of it, by the way, borrowed money. Again, I point out that these aren't my numbers; these are the government's numbers, the direct fiscal impact of the Common Sense Revolution. It points out the revenue lost by the tax cut, and it is, over the next four years, about \$12 billion while you take the debt of the province up by \$22 billion.

So I say to the government, yes, people in this province are prepared to do their bit to get the deficit under control. They are prepared to sacrifice to get our deficit eliminated. But they have an awful lot of difficulty, when they're being asked to make major sacrifices — if we have to do those enormous cuts in the interest of getting the deficit under control, tell me again how we can afford a tax cut that if you're making \$150,000 in this province you're going to get \$5,000 more a year in take-home pay. How can we afford that?

*Interjection.*

**Mr Phillips:** The member across — one of them is barracking. Those again are not my numbers; they're the government numbers.

So that's the first thing about Bill 47 that I think the people of Ontario have a right to be aware of, that the government over the next four years is going to add \$22 billion to the debt of this province — \$8,000 a household — a dramatic increase in interest costs to pay for that debt, and a majority of that deficit is accounted for by the tax cut.

I know the tax cut's very popular. As I said, I don't think there's a service club in Ontario that the Conservative members haven't phoned and said, "I want to come and talk to you." When you get there, they'll give you the big pat on the back, "Thank you very much for the tax cut," but the penalty that the people of Ontario are paying right now is severe. I guarantee you, I absolutely guarantee you that people won't forgive you.

When you said you wouldn't introduce new user fees, and then less than a year into your mandate new user fees; when you said you wouldn't touch health care and 20% of the hospital funding is gone; when you said you would guarantee classroom education funding, and we now find for students enormous tuition fee increases, and for classrooms across this province they are being either larger classes, junior kindergarten's eliminated, our

education for our adults has been eliminated — things that the government said it wouldn't touch.

The second thing about this budget bill is this. The government promised us during the campaign — and in my opinion, this is probably the most important promise the government made, and it wasn't a general promise and it wasn't a hazy promise; it was very specific — "this plan will create 725,000 new jobs over the next five years starting January 1, 1996." And yet the budget that this bill is implementing points out, strangely enough, on page 39 in the budget — and the people of Ontario, I think, will want to look at this document — it points out that in 1996 there are going to be — these are the government numbers — more people out of work than there were in 1995. And then it goes on to point out that in 1997 there will be more people out of work than there were in 1995, and in 1998 more people out of work than there were in 1995. Not my numbers. These are the government's own predictions about unemployment.

1730

So we find the Common Sense Revolution is well under way, it's sweeping the land, and what's happening? Here's what's happening. I happened to look at the most recent government release on jobs. Yes, it's just a year into their mandate and I don't blame them for all the employment problems, although I must say I was surprised that when there was a good month for employment, February, the government took credit for it and said, "Look, the Common Sense Revolution is working."

The report cards are beginning to come in. Employment in Ontario decreased 17,000 in May. The release goes on to point out in table 12 that there were actually 10,000 fewer jobs in Ontario than there were three months ago. We find that on January 1 there were 489,000 people unemployed in Ontario. What is it now? It's 526,000, almost 40,000 more people out of work in Ontario than there were on the first of the year.

I agree it is early in the mandate, but perhaps the most important promise this government made was its jobs promise, yet I could scarcely believe it when I got the budget. The government itself is predicting there will be more people out of work in 1996, 1997 and 1998 than when the government came into office. I add, and I think this is strange, that in 1994 the gross domestic product growth in Ontario was 5.5%; in 1995 it was 3.1%. Those were the final years of the NDP government, the one the current government rails against. What are they predicting? The government is predicting for 1996 real growth of 1.9%; in 1997 real growth of 2.8%.

What do we have now? First we have the government's fiscal plan with the debt going up \$22 billion over the next four years. Every family in this province will owe \$8,000 more four years from now than it does right now, and we'll be paying interest on that. Why? It is because a majority of that increased debt is a result of the tax cut. Who benefits by the tax cut? Those best off in our province. The more you make, the bigger the cut.

We're finding that people who are most vulnerable — the unemployed, people whose incomes are small — get very little of the tax break, obviously, if they're unemployed, but they are facing user fee after user fee, including a user fee on drugs, something this government



gave a solemn promise on. It couldn't have been clearer in the Common Sense Revolution: "no new user fees; no new copayments."

Why is that? The public should understand very clearly that this government is going to implement the tax cut; I have no question of that. It is a fundamental belief of the true believers in the Common Sense Revolution, the core belief. They won't back off that.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Phillips:** Mr Jordan is barking over there, but as I go to my seniors' homes and what not I'll say, "Mr Jordan ran on a campaign where he went around the nursing and seniors' homes in his riding and said, 'Elect me, trust me, I won't introduce any new user fees.'" Now we're exactly a year into the mandate, and what is Mr Jordan doing? He's got a new user fee for seniors and he is seeing hospitals close across the province, and OPP detachments being closed when he ran on a campaign of law and order. It will be very interesting.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Phillips:** Again they're barking across the way because they don't like to hear that the people of Ontario are beginning to wake up to the fact that you promised a lot of jobs and you're not delivering them. You promised you would not introduce new user fees and you've introduced new user fees. You promised you would maintain classroom spending and you're not. Why is all that happening? Because you want to give a tax break to the best off, the richest in this province, and every penny of that is borrowed money.

This is voodoo economics. It's like saying to somebody, "We finally earned enough money we can declare a dividend," when you're losing money and you can't afford a dividend, but "We're going to declare it anyway." This budget bill begins the implementation of that. I assure you three years from now, as the quality of life in this province is suffering, we will find that those who are best able to deal with it are also the ones who are getting the big tax break.

I also say that I was mildly surprised by the elimination of the employer health tax in this bill on the first \$400,000 of payroll. This was going to be the big — the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale, you went and ran with all the small business people and said: "Listen, elect me. I'm going to get rid of this."

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale):** You weren't even there. You don't know what I said.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order.

**Mr Phillips:** Well, he's barking. I assume you ran on this campaign. If you didn't, then you can correct the record later tonight. But I assume you ran on this.

**Mr Hastings:** Don't assume anything.

**Mr Phillips:** The member from Etobicoke is saying perhaps he didn't run on this campaign. This is what you promised. This is what the people of Ontario assumed you were running on. You promised that you were going to eliminate the employer health tax on the first \$400,000 of payroll and you were going to do it immediately. This was the big engine, the job-creating engine. Strangely enough, the big job-creating engine isn't being eliminated. As a matter of fact, the government said: "This is

the thing that will create all these jobs. This is the one thing that will get things going."

What have you done? You got elected a year ago. Nothing's happened on the employer health tax. You've been in office for a year. Nothing's happened. Furthermore, nothing is going to happen at all in 1996 on the employer health tax, your big job-creating engine, the thing you said you would move on quickly — nothing. Then we find that you're going to implement it not quickly; it will be 1998 before you implement your promise on the employer health tax.

Amazingly enough to me, on the bill that deals with the details of the employer health tax, the very first thing you actually do instead of reducing the employer health tax is you increase the tax by eliminating what used to be a holiday. Right now, if you hire someone in the province of Ontario, you don't pay the employer health tax on the first year of that employee. But the very first thing you have in your bill here is, "Let's terminate the one-year tax holiday on increases in payroll, effective the end of 1996." Not only have you decided to delay the implementation of the elimination of the employer health tax on the first \$400,000 of payroll — delay it dramatically — you've actually increased the taxes for small business.

Why is all that happening? It is happening to fund the tax cut and it is happening by the government deciding to violate the principles it ran on. Certainly you ran a great campaign; certainly the people of Ontario bought it. They bought this: "This plan guarantees full funding for health care, law enforcement, and education spending in the classroom."

We now find school board after school board, college after college, university after university, having to cut classrooms. We now find our law enforcement organizations actually cutting staff. Why? Because they rely on government funding from the government to municipalities, and you've cut that funding literally in half.

In the health care area, I repeat that on July 15, as people in this province go to get their needed prescriptions, as people who are in nursing homes find that before they can get their prescription they've got to lay out \$2 — and that's a clear violation of a very specific promise you made here.

1740

You're now saying, "It exists in other provinces." Yes, but that isn't what you said during the campaign. You said during the campaign that you looked at other provinces, you looked at these copayments, you looked at user fees in other provinces — "We looked at those kinds of options, but we decided on something different." Now we find that you didn't decide on something different; you just decided not to tell anybody before the election that you were going to bring in these user fees.

It's the second part of Bill 47 that is questionable at best, and that is the job-creating potential of the Common Sense Revolution, and we already find that the government itself, rather than seeing the numbers of people out of work dropping, is predicting more people out of work. There are actually more people out of work in the province of Ontario today than when you came into office a year ago. You came into office a year ago saying, "Final-



ly there's a breath of fresh air in the province." A year ago, at the end of May, there were 504,000 people out of work, and here we find 526,000 people out of work. These are your own Ministry of Finance numbers. At the end of May last year, 504,000 people; at the end of May this year, 526,000 people. As I say, I don't blame the government or hold it accountable for all the problems of the province at this stage, but it's a year into the mandate and now people are beginning to ask the tough questions.

We find that this bill will add dramatically to the deficit and the debt of the province; it will dramatically reward the best-off in our province; it will drive cuts in expenditures in areas you said you would never cut, and so I think the people of Ontario — and I accept they still are supportive of this government — are beginning to ask the right questions, including, I might add, the right questions about the style.

One of the things that concerns me most about this government is its approach to dealing with the problems. I'm very disturbed about what I've seen coming out of the Solicitor General's office and I'm very disturbed about the way the situation developed at Ipperwash. I'm very disturbed about the way the response took place here in the Legislature when the Legislature opened on March 18 and I'm very disturbed about the alleged beatings at the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre. It's all part of a pattern. I think people will begin to recognize that what we have is a government that will look after those who are best able to look after themselves and will punish the most vulnerable. We've got a mean-spirited government, and this bill is the start of implementing that mean-spirited approach.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale):** It seems that the member for Scarborough-Agincourt has clearly stated that the realities of June 1995 are now about to sink in. Personally, I'm not surprised that the people of Ontario bought their story. The story at that point in 1995 juxtaposed their plan with what had happened previously with the NDP. Of course, they'd lost all credibility. Can you imagine — Madam Speaker, you would know about that; you would appreciate that actually — within a few short years, less than five years, the debt of Ontario doubled? I'm almost flabbergasted to have some of them stand up and righteously proclaim that they still have the best intentions at heart and have the best plan for Ontarians. What a story.

I am consequently not shocked that the Progressive Conservatives came to office because they had another story. It sounded great in 1995, but today we know that what sounded great in 1995 is not necessarily great in 1996. As the member for Scarborough-Agincourt indicated, the debt we will have to get into, the money we will have to borrow, especially when we look at Bill 47, will be \$22 billion. The interest rate alone on that is very massive, consequently we do not really understand why you would insist on a 30% tax reduction when the numbers are so massive and staring you in the face and you will have to pay an exorbitant amount of interest.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further questions or comments? The member for Scarborough-Agincourt, would you like to sum up?

**Mr Phillips:** The concern I have fundamentally is about the job situation and my overriding concern is particularly about jobs for our young people. I don't think there's any question that the unemployment rate among our young people, ages 15 to 24, is well above 25%. It's officially reported at somewhere around 16%, but about 120,000 or 130,000 of them dropped right out of the labour force. We are finding and I think increasingly will find our young people extremely alienated.

**Mr W. Leo Jordan (Lanark-Renfrew):** Fearmongering.

**Mr Phillips:** Mr Jordan said, "Fearmongering." Let me tell you that if you don't begin in your caucus, as we do in our caucus and I'm sure the NDP do in their caucus, to start talking about the despair our young people face, you are going to sow the seeds of a dramatic problem; I absolutely guarantee it. If we don't recognize that our young people are bearing the brunt of what's going on out there right now, the unemployment rate well above 25%, the tuition fee increases of 20% and 15%, the desperate job situation they face —

**Mr Peter L. Preston (Brant-Haldimand):** It happened in one year, did it?

**Mr Phillips:** The member said, "Did it happen in one year?" No, it didn't happen in one year, and if you'd listen, you would recognize I say that.

**Mr Preston:** It happened in the past 10 years.

**Mr Phillips:** But to say "fearmongering," I say to Mr Jordan, wake up, because if you and your caucus don't wake up to this being a significant problem, I guarantee you we are looking for trouble in Ontario. I say to all of us that I attempted to make it a non-partisan issue, but Mr Jordan chose to say it's fearmongering.

**Mr Jordan:** You're not only fearmongering, you lack status.

**Mr Phillips:** If it's fearmongering, I don't care, because it's time you woke up.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. The member's time is up. Further debate?

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** Speaking to Bill 47, I want to tell you in advance that I'm going to be voting against it, as is every New Democrat here in the Legislature. I'll be focusing in the discussion on Bill 47 as providing that phenomenal election promise of a tax break, an election promise that was hammered away at during the course of last year's election here in Ontario, that had, as has been noted by any number of people, more than a little bit of appeal to a whole lot of voters, no two ways about it.

But we recognize, as we become exposed day after day to what's happening in this new Tory Ontario, and we understand that somebody's got to pay for that tax break. Somebody's got to pay so that the promise of a tax break to the very richest in our society can be fulfilled.

One of the reasons we're here at a quarter to 6 on June 27, the last day the House is sitting in this session, still debating bills and not having planned things so that we can even be close to wrapping up events for the day and for this session, is that much of yesterday and today was very much focused on who's paying for the tax break.

You're going to recall that yesterday and the day before in my private member's statement the issue of the



attack on the 22 foodservice workers downstairs in this very Legislative Assembly was raised here in the chamber. We witnessed the destruction that this tax break for the very rich is causing, because we saw who is paying for it. It's those 22 women and men for whom there's no job come Monday — finished. It's gone; it's over. Every one of the members of this Legislative Assembly making \$78,000-plus a year is going to get a paycheque next week.

Twenty-two women and men working downstairs, some for as long as 18 years: Anna — we talked about her with her permission — 56, 57 years old now, is not going to find work anywhere else. There are no other jobs for her; we know that. We're not talking about reducing the deficit or reducing the debt; we're talking about giving a tax break to the very richest that's going to cost the people of Ontario an additional \$20 billion in borrowed money. This government is going to have to borrow up to \$22 billion just to pay for the tax break. That's in addition to all the victims it leaves behind, the human debris, the human flotsam it leaves behind as it pursues this break for the very richest. The folks downstairs in the Legislative Assembly foodservices department, they're the kind of folks this province is made up of.

1750

Things seemed to a whole lot of Ontarians to be relatively fine as long as it was, oh, single mothers who were being beaten up on. They were told to take the hit, the 21%, 22% reduction in support for themselves and their children, and live as often as not in far less than suitable accommodations but try to survive through these incredibly difficult times of high unemployment and no jobs.

If the Tories are going to keep their promise, why don't they keep their promise to create 725,000 new jobs? Please, I say to Mike Harris, if you're going to keep a promise, back off on the tax break for your rich friends but keep your promise to create 725,000 new jobs.

That's what people here in the province and folks down in Welland-Thorold are telling me with sincerity and with more than a little bit of desperation. They haven't got a whole lot of confidence in their future and in the future of their children with this government's policies that favour very much the rich and the powerful wherein big banks, making billions of dollars of profit a year, last year and this year once again record profits, in a society in which they flourish at the expense of little people, of working people and retirees and pensioners and students and the sick, a society in which big corporations — this is Harris's Tory Ontario — like General Motors, with its record profits last year of \$1.4 billion, flourish with massive, new, unprecedented record profits but little people keep taking the hit, like the folks in Welland-Thorold, like the folks in every community across this province, like the folks downstairs, the foodservice workers here at Queen's Park.

There's going to be a one-week shutdown, and then who moves in but another big corporate friend of the Tories. Marriott — I know you're familiar with them, Speaker — moves in with a sweetheart deal, a sweetheart

contract with his friends wherein they're guaranteed profits. What's going to happen is that even if they don't make a profit, out of general revenues the Legislative Assembly has to piece them off, do the grease, the payola, because that's the kind of contract big corporations are able to negotiate with this government, with people of this ilk, these Tories. Again, 22 committed, dedicated, long-serving workers downstairs are being sent home and told, "Don't bother to come in on Monday."

Let's take a look at some of the people we're talking about. These people are characteristic of the victims we're witnessing across Ontario. This government was okay to the middle class and to working people as long as the victims were the other, as long as it was single mothers, as long as it was the poor who were being told to live on 22% less of what was already a modest income. Now we're seeing the real thrust of it, the real issue here, and it's an outright attack on working people.

The foodservices workers' roles used to be done, in the past, by a private contracting service. The government took it over, because of the problems that existed with that private corporation and the contract, in 1978. One woman downstairs has been working there not just since 1978, but for the two years prior when there was still the old private contractor. She's now got 18 years of service. She's got two kids; they're six and 11 years old. She only works a 30-hour week; she's only allowed to work a 30-hour week. Understand that.

Last Thursday she was given a written offer by Marriott of \$7.25 an hour. That's what Marriott proposed to pay her, with no guarantee of a job beyond even that first day. There were no benefits and there was certainly not even an indication of the 30 hours a week she works now. It can't be done. That's not an alternative. That doesn't constitute a choice.

As she points out to us, she could end up with just two hours' work. There's no way. Two hours a day — that's what they could do to her. There's no way she could put her child in child care and come to work with only two hours' work a day, not at \$7.25 an hour, not here in downtown Toronto.

One man downstairs has got seven years' experience. He's got a diploma in hotel management. He's got a wife and two kids, and he's got a mortgage to pay. If he chooses to take this job with no security whatsoever, he's being offered a crummy \$9 an hour. He just can't do it. He points out to us that because of the reduction in staff already from 30-plus down to 22, he's already doing the workload of five people. There's no way he can survive with his family on what's being proposed. His job's gone.

A 57-year-old woman downstairs with 18 years of service, and her husband's on disability, is being offered so-called bridging to retirement. Sounds good. It does sound good at first, this concept of bridging so she can collect a pension, a very modest pension. But after exhausting her package she's going to have no pay for the two years before this meagre pension kicks in. She points out to us, "Look, I've got to get through two years with no money" — none, no income. She asks, "Who's going to feed me for two years?"

Another woman working a 32-hour week: She's been offered \$8.50 an hour should she choose to come on with



Marriott, with no guarantee of that job lasting beyond one day and with no guarantee of the number of hours a week she's going to be permitted to work, and no benefits. She's got kids and the oldest child was planning to go to university come September of this year. It's just not going to happen now. Mike Harris and the Tories took away this woman's job; they're taking away her child's future, because there's a youngster who's being told, "No, In Mike Harris's Ontario there's no room for you in Ontario's universities or colleges."

That's what happens when we see the sort of job destruction that the Harris government, the Tories here, are intent on carrying on.

One of the other workers downstairs, an experienced cook with four years' service, is making what is now a reasonable income. He was offered a fraction of that to work elsewhere — elsewhere — in the Marriott system, not even here at Queen's Park. But he's got no guaranteed hours, no guaranteed minimum number of hours, no guarantee that new job placement is going to last more than even one day. He's got two kids and a wife who's seven months pregnant.

He had been a faithful employee. He had worked hard. He had done everything he was supposed to do. He thought he could trust the Harris Tories. He's learned better. He's learned better because he's learned that there's really no choice. He hasn't been given options. He's been told: "There's the door. To hell with you." In Mike Harris's Ontario the fact that this is a skilled, trained worker, the fact that he's being sent out the door —

*Interjections.*

1800

**Mr Kormos:** Look, we've got members opposite laughing. The minimum wage here inside the Legislative Assembly is \$78,000 a year. That's the minimum wage. A whole lot of members of this assembly make a lot more than that and they're telling little people making \$14 and \$15 and \$16 an hour and working only 30- and 32-hour weeks: "Sorry, Jack, you're on your own. The game's over. See, we've got to piece off our rich friends. We've got to enhance the environment that nurtures the big banks," with their enormous profits and their daily abuses of little people like the folks watching this right now. These Tories are saying, "We've got to nurture an economy in which the big corporations can make bigger and bigger profits and where workers are going to be forced to earn less and less." That's exactly what the 30% tax break is all about.

For a year and change now we've been watching this government, these Tories, slash public services, wipe out thousands of jobs for hardworking, committed people in the public service, in the public sector, people whose jobs are relevant to the daily lives of each and every one in each of our communities. We've seen them chop social assistance payments, and in the course of doing that rolling up billions of dollars in cuts, all for the tax break, all to be handed over, to be stuffed into the pockets of the richest and the most powerful in this society.

Now we've got Bill 47 in front of us. Is it going to pass? You know what? I suspect so. I suspect Bill 47 is going to pass because the Tories are going to use their

majority here to ram through a piece of legislation that does nothing for the lives of working people, nothing for the poor, nothing for the sick and the elderly or for young people who aspire to get an education in our colleges and universities. Well, they used to be our colleges and universities. They've being taken away from us too.

Bill 47 wraps up all this money being taken from working people in Ontario and delivers it in a neatly wrapped package, bow-tied, to the wealthiest and most powerful. It's not the kind of Ontario that Ontarians where I come from want.

There are some revelations inherent in this, because finally this government, these Harris Tories have been forced to acknowledge that their tax break for the richest and the most powerful is going to cost money. Somebody's got to pay. It's the sick, the elderly, the youthful students, the poor and the working people in the province who are going to be paying and paying and paying. It's going to cost lots of money. You heard me mention earlier that they're going to have to borrow some \$20 billion to \$22 billion over the course of the term of this government, adding to the provincial debt. That's in addition to the \$5 billion they pulled out of workers' pockets this year by virtue of their attack on public sector workers.

We're seeing it in every community in this province. We're seeing the attacks on public services. Down in Niagara region we're undergoing real crises. We're undergoing crises in education. We finally have one. The minister promised a crisis in education. Well, by God, the minister delivered because at the end of the day, sure enough, he did create one.

We've got a crisis in Niagara. We've got children out there in portables when they should be in real schools. We've got children out there who are being denied junior kindergarten because this government doesn't think it's good to educate our youngest people, doesn't think it's good to lay a foundation for a healthy, strong education with junior kindergarten.

If you're rich you're okay because you can go to a private school. That's part of the mechanism; that's part of the scheme. The richest get the good education and your children, my friends, do without. Your littlest kids are paying among the biggest prices so this government can make the wealthy yet richer and can make the profitable corporations yet wealthier. That's what the equation is all about.

Let's talk about what this tax break means in real terms if you aren't rich, if you aren't one of the wealthy and the powerful, if you aren't Frank Stronach. You know Frank Stronach, don't you? The guy who owns Magna Corp. This guy last year had a take-home paycheck, a personal paycheck of over \$40 million here in the province of Ontario. We've got double-digit unemployment down in Niagara region and Frank Stronach could take home a personal paycheck last year generated by hundreds of thousands of workers, most of them non-union, who struggle along in the most difficult of work-places.

We've got Conrad Black —

**Mr Ruprecht:** Conrad who?



**Mr Kormos:** Tubby Black as he's known to many — buying up the press across this province; Conrad and Babs seizing control of small-town media and imposing their editorial will on those small-town journalists so that folks in the small town will never get any real insight into what's happening in the world outside their community.

How come this government wants to steal from the working folks of Ontario, from the poor and the sick and the elderly, from our parents and our grandparents? So that Tubby Black can get a bigger piece of the action? Tubby Black needs a tax break? Give me a break.

Let's see what the break means. Let's talk about real people. Let's not talk about Conrad and Babs Black. Let's talk about a couple with two kids, like a whole lot of families down where I come from, with an income of, let's say, \$25,000 or \$26,000. Believe it or not, Speaker, because I know you're from Toronto, there are a whole lot of families, working families, hard-working families that have been coping, struggling to raise two kids on an income of \$25,000 a year down where I come from, and that's if they're fortunate enough to be employed in Mike Harris's Tory Ontario.

Let's talk about what the tax break is going to mean for a couple with two kids and an income of \$25,000 to \$26,000 a year. Do you know what Harris's tax break is going to do for them for the whole tax year of 1996? The tax break for these hard-working folks in Welland-Thorold, like so many of them, will be \$22 — not a month, but a year. That 22 bucks is going to be used up in short order by the new user fees that are being imposed at every level, on everything: user fees if you're a victim of crime, because we know that's coming down the road, coming down the tubes; user fees if you want to access a library: user fees if you've got to go to get a prescription filled down at Vasko's Pharmacy on Ontario Road; user fees that are coming down the pike for things like garbage pickup, increased user fees for water services to households.

1810

The prospect of privatization: Look, we see this government, the Harris Tories, in this orgy of privatization, privatizing things like our foodservice workers down here in the Legislative Assembly so that 22 hard-working women and men are sent out the door with no so much as a "How do you do?" or a "Thank you kindly."

We know now that there are plans to facilitate the privatization of water and sewer systems in each and every community across this province, in each and every regional municipality. There are companies out there — one from France that has a whole lot of experience doing this in France set up office right here in Toronto and is ready to lay out hard cash on the barrelhead to municipalities and regional municipalities to buy their water and sewer systems. Because of the incredible attack on municipalities and on the public sector by the Harris Tories, these communities are becoming increasingly anxious to raise money any way and wherever and whenever they can.

Once those municipalities have been forced to sell off their water and sewer systems, control over the delivery — that private company owns the pipe, owns the line

under the ground, just like Rogers and your cable. Nobody's doing you any favours there; they're motivated by the desire to make profits. When they've got the monopoly, when they've got the only water and sewage line in town, you've got no choice but to pay what they tell you to. Ontarians are going to pay and pay.

You don't like the figure of a \$25,000 income and what that does for a family of four in terms of a tax break? With \$25,000 you get a crummy \$22 tax break, every penny of which plus is going to be used up in the new user fees the Harris Tories are forcing on families and on individuals and on the sick and the elderly and students here in the province.

Let's talk about somebody who's a little more upscale, somebody getting into the middle-income earners, like around \$35,000. Let's talk about those folks because we've got folks down in Welland-Thorold in that income range as well. Let's say it's a single person with no dependants earning \$35,000 a year. The tax break for that person is \$105 for the whole tax year. Once again, we're talking about \$2 a week. We're talking about money that's going to be used up in short order by the increased transit fees.

That's happening in every municipality in the province — increased transit fees to take a bus or public transit. Mind you, take it now, because there won't be public transit much longer. Increased user fees, whether it's for garbage pickup, to use the swimming pool in the summertime, to use the public library or, as we're going to be seeing in short order, to have you sewage hauled away or your water shipped into your house.

We all know there's a deficit. We all know there's a debt. We know that. There's probably no single issue over which there is less of a secret. The fact is, with the \$5 billion in cuts, this government is going to reduce this year's deficit by less than \$1 billion in contrast with last year.

This is flim-flammy at its height. This is the escalation of the disparity between the wealthiest and the most powerful and the working people of this province and their retired parents and their youngsters who would aspire to do a little better for themselves than maybe their parents could. That used to be a dream. It used to be an aspiration of a whole lot of families that your children would do better for themselves than you were able to do. That's why a whole lot of parents over the course of years sacrificed and made commitments and invested in their future and in their children's future, but that opportunity's being seized from you now because the things you invested in, the things you built, the things you sacrificed for are being taken away from you so that Mike Harris and the Tories can deliver their tax break to the very richest, so that the rich can become even richer and so that the powerful can acquire yet more power.

Earlier today when I was speaking here in the assembly this morning — it was around 11:15 am — I mentioned while I was speaking that folks in Toronto might want to come down to Queen's Park and meet some of the 22 working women and men whose lives are being destroyed, whose futures are being dashed by Harris Tories. Lo and behold, if by noontime there weren't some



20 people down in the cafeteria, people from all walks of life here in the province.

These folks who came in from all parts of Toronto went to the cafeteria and to the little dining room and met the workers and saw the Tory hacks, the Tory politicians down there wining and dining and, by God, having a good old time at the expense of these working people. They were anxious enough and concerned enough that the people who visited here today drafted a petition. The petition was drafted somewhat informally. The petition, drafted informally, says:

"To the Speaker:

"We, the undersigned, demand that you revoke the decision to put the 22 foodservice workers in the Legislative dining room and cafeteria out of work."

I've got to tell you, earlier today New Democrats went down to the cafeteria and gave each of the cafeteria and foodservice workers a pink rose. The reason why was out of a modest gesture of solidarity with these victims of the Harris Tories. It's a rose just like this. It was pink because it symbolized, among other things, the pink slips that Harris gave those people.

Why are we here at 6:15 at night instead of wrapping this up? Because there was some gross dishonesty engaged in over the course of the last 24 hours, because the government had promised that it would compel you to appear before the legislative assembly committee to answer for your decision, Speaker Al McLean, to answer for your decision to carry out the government's political agenda when you ought to be committed to performing an independent role.

There was a promise to have the Speaker, Al McLean, appear before that assembly to explain why he, in his capacity, would want to destroy these people's lives downstairs, but the government reneged. They flipped, they flopped, they prevaricated —

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. The member's time has expired. Questions or comments? Further debate? The member for Parkdale, go ahead.

**Mr Ruprecht:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for recognizing me.

First, I would like to congratulate the Progressive Conservatives for doing some things right. For instance, the Red Tape Review Commission, finding ways to eliminate unnecessary regulations, is one thing that was done the right way. I hope you will continue in that direction.

But we're here today also to look at some things where we could make some improvements. Let's look at some of them. What are the consequences of the Common Sense Revolution that you are now subjecting Ontarians to and how can we improve on your original documents? First, you've made some promises that we're going to hold you accountable for. There are, of course, the guarantees that the Minister of Education and Training would not cut classroom education funding. We know now that junior kindergarten and other problems will arise because of the cuts. I'm thinking about English as a second language, and there will be a number of other massive cuts that will affect education detrimentally.

Of course, you will have to do some of these cuts because you're going to have to borrow \$22 billion over

the next four years, and consequently the axe will fall in an even more severe fashion. That will mean, obviously, that you will even have to increase tuition fees. They're high enough now; you've increased them dramatically over this last year, and I suppose they might even go higher next year.

**1820**

Then you promised also to Ontarians that you would not introduce user fees. I know that right now as we speak, some of your bureaucrats are operating to impose these user fees on July 15. In two short weeks the axe will fall and every senior, when he or she wants his or her prescriptions filled, will have to pay a \$2 user fee.

In addition to that, you've done even worse, without real renegotiation or reconsideration. For instance, you're going to charge everyone a \$2 user fee, especially the most vulnerable of our population, namely the ex-psychiatric population. We know there won't be any savings. In fact, do you want to save any money? Is that the goal of the budget of 1996? It said here, your budget, your future, "We want to save." In fact, you're saying: "We want to do better than you've done in the past. We want to do better than the NDP has done." Are you doing better right now?

Do you want to save some money? Look outside right now. Mr Leach, I want to tell you that right now when you walk out these doors in front, there is a limo running, there's a man inside. It's 23 degrees outside, he's got the windows closed, the limo is running. Do you want to save some money? Either cut some limos, cut some services, cut some gas or tell them, like we used to do: "For God's sake, when you're outside, it's 23 degrees, it's summer in Ontario. You've got no business running these cars outside." Have a look right now.

I'll tell you one more thing. I don't want to use them publicly, but I've got the plate numbers right here. Do you want to save some money? Do something about it. It's small, but it's significant. It's symbolic and it will set an example.

Madam Speaker, do you want to save some money? Look at our government buildings right across Ontario. We're spending millions upon millions of dollars in hydro costs. Our hydro rates are increasing. Every government building is lit up like a Christmas tree. Do you want to save money? Cut down on the hydro in our own buildings. You walk by here about 11 o'clock at night, what do you see? Has this Conservative government made a promise to save some money? I look at the budget speech of 1996, the example is right here, what we're doing about it. Cut the hydro rates. Cut the hydro bill and save the province millions of dollars in rates. It's small, it's an example, but it's important because the rest of Ontarians have to live by their income and so do you.

Do you want to make some promises? You've made promises here. Premier Mike Harris has made some promises here and we're asking you today to improve upon these promises; if nothing else, at least to keep them.

What are they? Look what happens in our own area in Parkdale. By golly, there's a good example. You've got the psychiatric population. They're going to have to pay two bucks for a user fee for every prescription filled. Do



you think they're going to do that? Do you think they're going to go to the drugstore and pay two bucks for their prescriptions, or are they going to use those \$2 and buy cigarettes?

What about the safety of the health care workers and what about the saving of the money? The two bucks you're imposing is going to cost you thousands. Why? We know what's going to happen out there. There are going to be more police calls, there are going to be more emergency services in hospitals, their staff will cost a lot more, and we will have to pay more than this \$2 user fee can possibly bring in. Police services, hospital services — everywhere we see across Ontario it's going to cost us money. It's not going to save us money.

What do we do? We're now bringing it to your attention and we are asking you, if you're interested in saving money, don't throw people away. The hurt and the suffering of our residents in Ontario and the west end of Toronto where I come from will be greater than your saving of the money. In fact, there won't be any savings; it's going to cost us more. What do you do? We're bringing these issues to your attention today.

Mr Minister, I'm asking you, will you take it to the cabinet table? Will you stand up and fight for all those who are going to save us money because they don't have to pay the user fees? Every senior in Ontario is going to talk to you. We want you to make a commitment today. What's that commitment? We want you to raise it in cabinet. Are you going to make that promise today? Are you going to be brave enough to stand up and really save Ontarians money? Are you going to talk about reducing the user fee? Are you going to cut it down because it isn't saving us money? You want to save money? Do that. It's one step in the right direction. Not only that, it is the right thing for you to do.

You know what? You come to Parkdale. Have a look. I'm asking you right now, each one of you, who comes to Parkdale today? Who are those people who come to Parkdale? Who wants to visit Parkdale?

**Mr Laughren:** We know.

**Mr Ruprecht:** Yes, we know. We know. We want you to come and have a look. We want you to come and have a look at what happens in our downtown streets in terms of safety, in terms of what our own police personnel have to put up with. They're out there trying to protect the residents and our citizens at night. They're trying to protect women. They're trying to give us back the safety of our streets.

Are we saving money? It's going to cost us more because you're asking us, in terms of user fees, to pay for police services. You're going to be asking us for user fees to pay even to take out a simple book from our libraries. You're asking us also to pay more and more instead of saving money. You want to save money? Look at some of these suggestions. I know. I'll invite you, each one of you, to come on to our streets of Parkdale and look at what we call the institutional destruction of a neighbourhood.

What happened there? We know, for example, that the Ministry of the Solicitor General has decided in its wisdom to bring in 1,400 parolees or ex-prisoners into a community that is already rife with injustice and unfair-

ness. Can you imagine bringing 1,400 cases into a neighbourhood, what that would mean — 1,400 ex-convicts — bringing them down there? Then of course what happens is that next door to it, within 300 metres, you're now going to be asking us in our neighbourhood to bring in a children's centre because you have some extra youth you want to have rehabilitated.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Could I have order, please, in the government benches?

**Mr Ruprecht:** I'm not surprised that our urges and that our requests —

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon):** Madam Speaker, stop the card game, please.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, member for Lake Nipigon.

**Mr Ruprecht:** — and that our pleas are falling on deaf ears. Open your ears and listen to the cries of the people in the street and you will know what's happening there. I'm reminding you that the children's centre you're putting in within 300 metres of a parole and rehabilitation centre isn't the right place to do it. Before these kids get to the home, before these kids open the door, they will have to run the gauntlet of drug-dealers, pushers, pimps, prostitutes and robbers. I'm asking, that cannot be — or can it? — the right neighbourhood to rehabilitate children who need an example and a role model. That cannot be.

Are you doing it? Are you prepared to stand up and say: "Let's have some sense here. Let's look at the destruction of our neighbourhood. Let's not place every social agency into one area, shoehorn it into one area. Let's look at it again"? There are in all of Toronto three methadone clinics, and you guessed it: Out of three methadone clinics in all of Toronto, guess where two of them are? The two of them are within one kilometre of where you have a children's centre, a crisis care facility, a psychiatric centre, a parole and probation office, and all of them shoehorned into one neighbourhood. Does that make sense?

Does that make sense, for the Progressive Conservatives, that we're bringing in people from as far away as Brampton, Halton, Mississauga, all over that place from that part of our cities, and we're bringing them in guess to where? We're bringing them into Parkdale, and Fort York because it's on the border. We're bringing them in and we're saying to them: "We cannot send you back to where you belong and where you have your homes, your support services and your friends. No, we want you to stay down with the other folks who have severe social problems." That's what you're doing and you're not willing to look at it.

1830

It doesn't make sense to bring everyone who has a mental problem from Mississauga into the city of Toronto and leave them on the streets because you know there's no money left. There is no money for after-care services, there's no money for follow-up, there's no money for job retraining programs. There's no money because you're cutting it. Does it make sense? Does it serve the vulnerable people?



Do you want to come to Parkdale? I welcome you two to come to Parkdale. I know you've been there before; you've been there lots of time. I'm happy you've been there, and I know you've been there too, and I know that Mr Clement, who's sitting right in front of you has been there too and we've discussed it many times. Wake up. You can't bring in people from Mississauga, Halton and Brampton and put them all into one area. It doesn't make any sense. You're destroying the neighbourhood. It's a hospital without walls. It's like a ward. You can't do that. It doesn't make any sense. You're going to have a problem here.

It's the destruction of a neighbourhood which is supported by the government, and we have a responsibility to the people to say no. We have the right to send them back to where they come from. If they come from Brampton, they should have a house in Brampton. If they come from Mississauga, for God's sake, give them some money and open some homes in Mississauga. If they come from Halton, for God's sake, open the homes in Halton. Let them go back. They deserve to go back where they come from. You cannot push them all into one area and say, "Yes, we wash our hands, that's it," like Pontius Pilate. "It's not our responsibility."

What does the Common Sense Revolution say about this? Yes, of course, Mr Shea is nodding his head right now. The Common Sense Revolution speaks about justice, fairness and a good deal, and that's what we want you to do.

We want you to open your eyes and open your ears and do something about it. Are you ready to make a commitment today to the people of Ontario to look at it? Are you ready to think about it at least, to see that you can't destroy a neighbourhood? This cannot be. This is not the right way to do it.

Just to make my final comments, we remember now that you made us a promise and I hope, for all Ontarians, you keep that promise, and that was that you will create jobs.

You said you have a plan. The Common Sense Revolution says: "We've got a plan. We know what to do and we're going to do it." I only hope, even though we're the party of the opposition, that you will succeed.

It's no good for us in Ontario — the Ontario residents are smarter than that — for people to simply stand up on partisan reasons and criticize the government without giving them credit. We give you credit where credit is due. I mentioned that earlier to you. You deserve some credit, but where you don't deserve the credit, you've got to open your eyes and you have to open your ears on what to do.

Your plan is going to be to create thousands of jobs, and I wish you well, but please remember the statistics today do not show it to us. Right now, within three months we know there are 10,000 jobs less, 10,000 more on unemployment than there were three months prior to this statistic.

We only hope that your plan will work because if it doesn't work, all of us will be the problem. Can you imagine a 30% tax reduction, a 30% payout and no jobs. This has to come back to haunt you.

I'm asking you to look at this job proposal and know what you are doing in the future. You have a responsibility now. Not only do we wish you well, but we want to say to you that you might even get our cooperation in terms of the job proposals you're going to come up with.

What will you do? Where is this job plan? Are you simply saying: "If we give residents 30% tax reductions, if we do something about tenants' rights and we get construction going up again, we're going to support the building industry and maybe there'll be jobs in the building industry. Sure enough, if we reduce the taxation, if we reduce the red tape, if we reduce regulations, that will increase the jobs"? I certainly hope so, but you also know we have our doubts.

I hope you're coming up with the right plan. I'm only hoping that you're coming up with something very specific because that will benefit all Ontarians, and to that end, I say thank you very much on this last day of this session. I only hope that by the time we meet in September the jobs you promised will begin to trickle down, because that's what you're saying; there's going to be a trickle-down effect. I only hope that the jobs you are promising will indeed be verified by real statistics. To that end, I wish you well; to that end, we're going to hold you accountable, because if you fail there are going to be thousands of Ontarians who are not going to look at you with any favour in the next election. You've got a job to do. I wish only that you are going to work hard and come up with the right plan.

**The Acting Speaker:** Questions or comments? Further debate?

**Mr Floyd Laughren (Nickel Belt):** I want to make a few comments on this bill, but before I do, I know there's a long tradition in this House of paying compliments to the Speaker. I must say that the Speaker in the chair now, who represents the riding of Riverdale, has done an exemplary job. It's always refreshing to see you take Bert's place or Big Al's place in the chair, because we know we're going to get firm but fair decisions from the chair. I know a lot of people in this House share that view, that when it comes to making decisions in the chair, no one makes firmer but fairer decisions than the member for Riverdale.

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North):** In the tradition of New Democrats from that riding.

**Mr Laughren:** In the tradition of New Democrats from that riding. As a matter of fact, in the tradition of New Democrats who have been in the chair. We all remember the member for Lake Nipigon, who was in the chair and set a standard which few people have met. This is Jack Stokes, of course, who was the Speaker of the Legislature in the minority Parliament.

**Mr Conway:** That's when Lake Nipigon had a real member.

**Mr Pouliot:** A fine soldier.

**Mr Laughren:** That's right, and the curvature of the Earth didn't bother him. But I must say that the former member for Lake Nipigon set a standard that has not been met until the member for Riverdale took her seat in the chair. I just wanted to make sure. I know it's a lonely position, but I wanted the member for Riverdale to



understand that a lot of us feel that way and I wanted to pass that on to you, Madam Speaker.

I should get to the bill.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Could I have order, please?

**Mr Laughren:** Yes, don't you people want to hear what I'm saying about the Speaker?

I did want to make a few remarks about this budget bill, because every now and again some action or another on the part of the government brings into very sharp relief the ideology that underlies the Common Sense Revolution. There have been a couple of things happen in the last little while that serve that purpose. One that has been the cause of some furore around this place was what has happened to the foodservices in this very building.

I know that the people across the province don't have any kind of connection with the foodservices workers in the Legislative Assembly. I understand that. There's no way they could because it's a very elite group who eat in the legislative dining room, a very elite group. Cabinet ministers, MPPs, senior bureaucrats in government dine in the legislative dining room. Even though it's open to others, that's who, by and large, eat in the legislative dining room.

So the Tories decide among themselves that they want a number of options available to them. One is cheaper food. They want to eat cheaper food, I guess, so they drive the wages down by 50% — 50% they drive the wages down. Oh, if it's not for cheaper food, maybe I'm wrong. Maybe they are not spending enough time at the trough and they want cheap food in the dining room, but maybe I'm wrong in that regard. Maybe I'm off base in that, and that's not the underlying reason. Maybe the underlying reason is they want a cheaper operation here. They don't want to subsidize the operation in the dining room.

That's what they said: They want to reduce the deficit of running the dining room. That's fine; that's an admirable goal. So I say to them: "Why don't you raise the prices? It's the elite who eat there anyway. Let them pay so that there's no deficit in the dining room." Stop asking the taxpayers to subsidize your food in this building. We're quite happy to raise the prices. I don't intend to eat there. I'm not going to eat in that place, now that you people have reduced the wages, laid them off. They're all gone as of today.

1840

Do you think I'm going to go down there and utilize that place and subsidize the Marriott chain? Why in the world would I do that? So you people can have cheaper food? So the Marriott chain can make more profits than they're already making? Is that what it's all about? Is it to reduce the deficit of the operation of the dining room? Yes, nod the Tories in unison, like a bunch of trained seals. That could be; perhaps you do want to reduce the deficit, and I agree with that. Go ahead. Reduce the deficit in the dining room.

But guess what? There's a variety of ways in which you could accomplish that, but guess which way the Tories choose to go? It's not efficiency in purchasing, which Marriott says it can do. No, don't do it that way.

It's not raising prices for the elite who eat there. No, don't do it that way. Guess what the way is? Drive down the wages of the workers by 50%, so that you can accomplish your goals. That's the only option acceptable to you.

When the workers in that place went and said to the Board of Internal Economy, "We think there's a better way of doing this," guess what? They got the back of the hand from you people. That's what motivates you; that's fine. We understand. But we don't agree with you. Then when we tried to get this raised before a committee of the Legislature, you said no. You won't even do that.

You won't even have your Speaker, Mr Al McLean, who does your bidding at every turn, come before the committee. Have you noticed, by the way, the attitude of the opposition in this place towards your Speaker? I've only been here 25 years, but I have never, ever seen the views of the opposition towards the Speaker the way they are now to the Honourable Al McLean. I can tell you, it is sad to witness, because traditionally there is respect shown for the Speaker, regardless of the party from which that Speaker sits. Traditionally, there is respect.

You don't have to be in this place more than one day in a row to see the lack of respect that's shown to the Speaker by the opposition parties, and that doesn't serve us well. I don't take great pride in that, because that does not serve this chamber well, and if it doesn't serve this chamber well, it's not serving the people of the province well, because that's who we all represent.

I regret very much what has happened, and this latest incident didn't help at all. I know it's what I would call an in-house issue, the foodservices here, and I don't expect the people of the province to connect to it. But I think it is symbolic of a lot more than that, and that's what has got us very upset in this assembly and why you saw us ringing bells today and being quite obstreperous and quite frankly obstructionist. But that's why, because we think it's wrongheaded.

You didn't listen to the people. You picked only one option, namely, driving down workers' wages to satisfy your demand that the deficit in the foodservices operation be reduced or eliminated. I agree with that. I don't see any reason — I don't want my lunches in this place subsidized. I don't need it; I don't want it. So let's get rid of the subsidy by charging prices that eliminate the deficit. Why don't you do that? But you won't do that.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Laughren:** No, you want prices low so that you can go down there and eat as you always have. It's true, because you had other options.

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean):** You were the chancellor.

**Mr Laughren:** We're not the ones who ran on a campaign called the Common Sense Revolution. You're the people in government now. Deal with it. Don't look back and say, "Well, you didn't do anything about it." You can go and say that forever if you want, but it's not going to deal with the problem. It doesn't deal with the problem.

I just had to get that off my chest because I really think it showed the ugly and nasty face of the Tory party. That's what it did. It was not necessary because there



were other options, but you picked the easy option of getting rid of the workers.

I'm just one person. I'm not saying this should alter the decision, but can you imagine how I would feel if I went down into that dining room to have a meal when we come back here in the fall for the fall sitting? Can you imagine how I'd feel? I would feel rotten. I'd say, "Here I am, going in to eat food subsidized by these workers' 50% wages." No, thank you. No, thank you. I'd rather make my sandwich and come in with a brown paper bag and eat that way. That's my right.

I understand that, but I fully expect the Tories to be lining up for cheap food in the fall rather than paying a decent level of wages to workers, some of whom have been there for 20 years. Twenty years and they're out the door. Thank you very much, Tory party. You really know how to treat people with class, don't you? You really did show your ugly and nasty side the way you dealt with these people in this very building. It perhaps will not make an impression on a lot of people, but I can tell you that some people, I hope enough people, will see what you did to these people who are paid \$17 an hour to start with and you reduce it by 50%.

**Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma):** Part-time.

**Mr Laughren:** Part-time. It is unbelievable what you did.

**Mr Pouliot:** More than 50%.

**Mr Laughren:** But that's the Tory party at work. Enough people, I hope, will understand what you did and why you did it. It's why you did it that bothers me the most.

Pick any argument you want. Let's pick the argument that you want to reduce the deficit at the foodservices. No problem. So how do you get to it? How do you arrive at that? How do you make it happen? You didn't choose any other options except driving the workers' wages down by 50%. Well, God bless you. Aren't you a wonderful bunch? Aren't you wonderful?

I guess it's in keeping with your 22% reduction in social assistance benefits. I guess it's in keeping with that. I guess it's in keeping with the application of user fees on seniors and people on social assistance. I guess it's all in keeping with that. It's a very neat package when you tie it all together, a very, very neat package.

**Mr Kormos:** They just voted themselves a pay increase.

**Mr Laughren:** Yes. On top of that, you give yourselves a pay raise, and us. We weren't asking for it, but you got it.

**Interjection:** Give it back.

**Mr Laughren:** Oh, give it back. I know that if people who get a tax cut — let's deal with the tax cut for a moment. The Tories are bringing in a 30% tax cut. Right? So the revenues are going to go down eventually by between \$5 billion and \$6 billion a year; that'll be the reduction in revenues.

I understand that because the Premier and the Minister of Finance a year ago or two years ago were saying Ontario does not have a revenue problem: "Stop whining at the feds. We don't have a revenue problem." That's what they kept saying to us when we were in government.

That's fine, so you cut down the expenditures and you can cut revenues too. That's what you're doing through the tax cut. But guess who — well, we all know who gets the advantage of the tax cut. In my own —

**Mr Baird:** You.

**Mr Laughren:** I get an advantage.

**Mr Baird:** Give it back.

**Mr Laughren:** No, and let me tell you why I'm not giving it back. I am not giving my tax cut back and I would discourage anybody and everybody from giving the tax cut back. You know what? Guess who the Tories want to turn back their tax cut to? The consolidated revenue fund. Guess who would do it? I know who would do it. Well-meaning people all across the province and not a single Tory in the land would ever return any of their tax cut to the province, not one.

I'll tell you, there's a couple of ways you can approach life in this world. One of them is on cooperation and sharing and the other is on acquisition and greed, and you have chosen the latter clearly. That's what you've done, and that's what the tax cut is all about as well. That's what the tax cut is about. I don't think you could deny that really. We all know who gets the advantage of the tax cut. They're not the ones who need it.

Picture this: A 30% tax cut to people on a graduated level, so that the more you make, the more you get back on your tax cut. Absolutely. At the same time, you're hammering people at the absolute bottom of the economic scale, people on social assistance, and now to help you pay for that tax cut, you've decided that the foodservices people will have their wages cut from \$17 an hour to \$7 or \$8 an hour, all to help you pay for the tax cut. You can't deny that. If you weren't doing the tax cut, you wouldn't have to do any of that stuff, almost none of it.  
**1850**

I don't want to get into a numbers game here because I'm not always spot on, but I would say that —

**Mr Pouliot:** Your record is almost flawless.

**Mr Laughren:** Yeah, right. I would say that when I looked at the numbers of the Tories in their budget and their economic statements, you're not going to balance your budget. Believe it or not, you're not going to balance your budget as quickly as — if we'd been re-elected, which obviously we were not. Fair point, fair point.

**Mr Preston:** You didn't get re-elected.

**Mr Laughren:** Of course I got that right. I can read the paper that we did not get re-elected and the Tories did.

But when I look at the numbers, if we had been re-elected, we would have balanced the budget a year before you're going to. You know why? Because we weren't going to do the tax cut. That's why. It's as plain and simple as that. So don't you people talk to me about reducing the deficit because you don't give a hoot about the deficit or you wouldn't be doing the tax cut. If you cared about the deficit, if you gave two cents' worth of concern about the deficit, you would not be doing the tax cut.

**Interjections.**

**Mr Laughren:** You wouldn't be. I'm telling you, you wouldn't be doing it. The rating agencies don't want you



to do it. They were on CBC Radio the other morning. I know you think that CBC Radio is a socialist plot, I don't know, but you probably wouldn't agree with anybody who spoke on CBC Radio. But there they were, and these are not left-wing people. I have trouble getting the words through my lips with these people in my audience, but I can tell you that they were saying that your numbers are not going to work. They're not going to work on the employment or unemployment numbers. They're not going to work. They're already not working. They're not going to work on the deficit numbers. Why? Because you're doing the tax cut. That is your Achilles' heel, my friend. The tax cut is your Achilles' heel.

I know it caters to the lowest common denominator in all of you, but it's not going to work. It will not work. I stand to be corrected as time unfolds. I've been wrong before and corrected before, so that part doesn't bother me. I've been wrong. I'm not trying to hold out myself as a paragon of perfection, I'm just telling you that your numbers — and I'm not the only one saying this — are not going to work and it's because of your tax cut. It's because of the 30% tax cut.

I'd like someone to tell me where the evidence is that a tax cut works to stimulate the economy. Show me where it works.

**Mr Kormos:** Ronald Reagan.

**Mr Laughren:** Somebody said Ronald Reagan. Some Tory over here said Ronald Reagan.

**Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton North):** That was your guy, Floyd.

**Mr Laughren:** Oh, over here said Ronald Reagan. Well, we know what happened with Ronald Reagan and his tax cut.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East):** Tell us.

**Mr Laughren:** It tripled. His deficit tripled with his tax cut. It did not work.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. Order, please.

**Mr Laughren:** It did not work. I can tell you —

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order, please. Thank you.

**Mr Laughren:** What did I do? Oh, them. Okay.

**Mr Kormos:** You're doing fine.

**Mr Laughren:** No. I can tell you that the tax cut will not work. The economists will tell you it won't work and I think you should have more respect for economists. May I tell you about economists?

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. Could I have order, please. Thank you.

**Mr Laughren:** There's an adage about economists. There's a couple of truisms about economists. One is that if you laid all the economists in the world end to end, they still would not reach a conclusion. But what I like better is the line that if you did lay all the economists in the world end to end, it would be a very good thing. That's what I feel about the economists of the world. However, I digress. I wanted to deal with some of your problems.

The other item I wanted to talk about ties in with the attitude of the Tory party towards people who don't have a lot, and that is user fees. I can tell you, Madam

Speaker, if I could count the number of times when we, the New Democrats, were in government and the Tories were over here, third party just like we are now, the criticism we had every time there was even a minor increase in a user fee — they were on their hind legs yelling at us that a user fee was a tax increase and that we couldn't disguise it as anything else and that we —

**Interjection:** Driving us into the ground.

**Mr Laughren:** Driving us into the ground. That's what the Tories were saying to us: even a small, small user fee on anything.

Now what do we get? After that, the Tories ran for election making a solemn promise to the seniors and others in this province that there would be no user fees and no cuts to the health care system. No user fees: That's what they said. I also heard Mike Harris say in the most sanctimonious of terms possible that if he didn't deliver on all the promises he'd made, he would resign.

I ask you, why is he sitting in the House today? Why is he still here? He should not be here. He broke a promise. He broke two promises — well, probably more than that, but two that I'll use as examples this evening. One, he broke the promise that he would not impose new user fees and would protect the health care system and protect seniors. Two, he broke the promise that he'd resign if he broke any promises. How can he still be sitting here with any sense of integrity? I don't know.

There's the member from White Bucks, as I speak. When I saw the member for Kitchener walk in with his white bucks I thought, this takes me back. I was elected in 1971 and I looked across the way and all of the Tory backbenchers had white bucks on, were wearing white shoes. And I thought, wait a minute. This man, Mr Wettlaufer, is not that old. How come he's — and then he told me he'd bought them at a yard sale. So I figured, well, that explains a lot.

Anyway, I digress yet again, but I can tell you that you're not fooling anyone with the imposition of user fees. You're fooling no one. The fee on drugs for seniors and people on social assistance is a user fee. You can try to pretend otherwise, but nobody believes you. I've heard more people call Mike Harris a liar on the user fees than on anything else. The seniors in this province are saying to me, and I'm just one member, that Mike Harris is a liar because he said there would be no user fees, and there are. I'm getting that being said to me time and time —

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener):** You wouldn't say that.

**Mr Laughren:** I didn't say that; I'm telling you what I'm getting when I go out there and meet with seniors. I find myself spending more and more time with seniors, and that's what they're telling me. They're saying: "How can he live with that? Why doesn't he get up and at least apologize to seniors and others in this world for lying to us about user fees?" I say: "Well, you know, that's Mike Harris and the Tory party. They have to pay for that tax cut one way or another. What better way to do it than on the backs of seniors and others who don't have very much?"

That's plain and simple. As a matter of fact, Madam Speaker, I haven't heard any heckling of me on this issue



because I think the Tories understand. I think they're embarrassed by this. You're embarrassed. Can you imagine being a Tory and going into the next election, whether it's two years from now or three years from now, and saying to the people: "I'd like your vote. I want to get re-elected because I like that cheap food in the cafeteria at the Legislative Assembly"? I can hear the constituents saying: "Wait a minute. Why should I re-elect you? You broke your promise last time. Mike Harris lied to us when he said he wasn't going to impose user fees. Why should I vote for you again?"

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs Margaret Marland):** I caution the member for Nickel Belt about his language. Would you consider withdrawing the unparliamentary language, please?

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**Mr Laughren:** I'll try, but those are not my words. I was talking about constituents and others across the province who said to me that Mike Harris is lying about the user fee thing. I would never say that. I would never, ever say that. I don't believe in using unparliamentary language in this place, so I would never say that, and I've said to people who have said that to me out there —

**The Acting Speaker:** I would ask the member, such an experienced member — I would ask with respect if you will withdraw.

**Mr Laughren:** Absolutely, Madam Speaker. As a matter of fact, I can't think of any request Madam Speaker would make of me that I wouldn't comply with. Any. Boy, that's a heavy-duty commitment, too, I have to tell you.

**Mr Rob Sampson (Mississauga West):** Will you resign?

**Mr Laughren:** No.

I really was trying to make a serious point that that's what people out there are telling me. I don't say that to them. I say to them, "If I repeat that, I'm going to have to withdraw it," depending of course on who is in the chair.

But the fact is, you really did break faith with people on that particular promise. You really did. You can squirm and skate and use weasel words and sucker clauses all you like about that, but at the end of the day you know and I know that that is a user fee on drugs. I don't disagree with what the Minister of Health says from time to time when he's asked to respond here, that we're the only province in Canada that doesn't have a user fee on drugs, a copayment on drugs. He's right. He's absolutely right. He says "copayment," not user fee.

But that's avoiding the issue of what you promised you would and would not do. You promised you would protect health care and not impose any user fees. It's in keeping with what's gone on in the rest of the country on drug plans; I acknowledge that. But that's not the issue. The issue is that you promised there would be no user fees and you imposed user fees on the drug plan. There really should not be much debate about that.

I say to members opposite, don't expect that you'll be welcomed with open arms for all your honesty in the way in which you have delivered on programs. Some of your programs, you have, obviously. You're delivering on the

tax cut, and I think by and large people will like that. But when you don't deliver on something such as the commitment not to impose a user fee, then you've got to understand that people will be angry about that, because people don't always weigh things off one against the other. Believe me, I've learned that over the years. I think you have to appreciate the fact that you're going to get some heat from seniors and others on your user fee on drugs.

As well, I could go on at some length on the whole issue of education, post-secondary and elementary and secondary, about how you promised not to touch classroom education. That's another case where you're not being honest with people, you really are not. You know if you've got a brain in your heads that you cannot take \$1 billion out of the education system without affecting the classroom. Do you think people are stupid out there? They know you can't accomplish that. They know that, and you know that as well. At some point you're going to have to 'fess up and say, "Okay, we acknowledge that you can't take that amount of dollars out of the system without it affecting the classroom."

Of course there are efficiencies. I think there should be all sorts of efficiencies achieved in the educational system. But you can't take \$1 billion out in a year and say that's the way it's going to be and it won't affect the classroom. We've already seen how it's affecting the classroom. I think it's about time you started being more honest with people about what you can deliver and what you cannot.

I remember I got in some hot water shortly after our government was elected back in 1990 when I admitted in a scrum that we could not deliver on all the promises in the Agenda for People. I admitted that. I got in some hot water because this is the first time it had actually been said. But I felt somewhat refreshed after saying it and not pretending that we were still going to deliver or were delivering on all those promises, because you can't do it. I think you're being less than honest with the people of the province when you say you're continuing to deliver on all the promises in the Common Sense Revolution. You can't do it.

As time goes on it will become increasingly clear that one of your big promises you can't deliver on is job creation; you can't deliver on those job creation numbers of 700,000-and-some jobs. You can't do it. It's not possible. You know you don't believe in government intervention to create jobs; you just want to create the environment. I don't think I'm casting it unfairly, and if that's the case, at some point you're going to have to confess that you were wrong, that you cannot do it.

The sooner you do it, the less painful it will be as we get closer and closer to the next election, because there's going to be more and more pressure on you to tell the truth. You're better to do it now and say, "We're not going to meet those job creation numbers," because it will be so evident, as we get close to the next election, that you won't achieve it that it will be much more embarrassing for you. You can carry on and pretend that things are going to work out the way you thought they would, but I can assure you that simply won't happen.



Madam Speaker, I appreciate very much your presence in the chair and the way you've managed to control the unruly mob over there.

**The Acting Speaker:** I thank the member for Nickel Belt. Questions and comments?

**Mr Pouliot:** By way of response, I hung on every word. It's not often that one has the privilege, or the blessing in this case of the dean, the wisdom of someone who has been here for a quarter-century reminding people that they shall reap the rewards of their ill-fated policies, reminding all of us that Ontarians are generous, that Ontarians see themselves as the most fortunate and the least fortunate. The dean, the member for Nickel Belt and former Deputy Premier, reminded us that whenever you hurt the poor in a deliberate and systematic fashion it will come back to haunt you.

He reminded us that there is a social dimension; he went as far as to say the essence of life when you deprive people of their basic needs and told us why: to give those who can run the fastest yet another opportunity to distance themselves from the field, from the middle class, from the marginalized, from the physically or mentally challenged, from those who have less in our society. It could have been otherwise; it could be otherwise.

Finally, he reminded and warned us about bad economics, that if you have a \$9-billion to \$11-billion deficit it makes little or no sense at all to call the banker and say, "Increase the credit line." They've borrowed more, and this lot will be asked to carry the guilt, for they will make every attempt to have us in the poorhouse in no time.

I thank you and, more importantly, I thank the member for Nickel Belt.

**Mr Toni Skarica (Wentworth North):** I've listened to the NDP give us their very sanctimonious talk on finances. I can't believe that they would say anything about finances. I didn't want to be here; you just wouldn't stop spending money. For five years we heard \$10-billion deficits and more and more, and we're paying more taxes. You would not stop spending money. You haven't stopped yet.

I want members of the public to look at the members' office and support staff expenses. Every damn one of you has spent more than \$200,000 except for Mr Pouliot, who snuck in at \$197,000. The member for Nickel Belt, attempting to criticize us, look what he spent after plunging us into debt for billions of dollars. I heard this crap during the election, "Well, you know, there was a recession so we had to plunge us into debt." There was a worldwide recession. What other jurisdiction in the world more than doubled its debt? Nobody. Just you.

You guys won't stop spending money. All of you have spent almost \$200,000 or more except for my friend Mr Pouliot, who is the only rich friend I have. I don't have any rich friends. Do you have to spend that kind of money? No. Look at what Mr Laughren spent. He spent \$252,000. Right underneath that is the Honourable Al Leach, who is one of our ministers. He spent \$121,000 — half of that.

**The Acting Speaker:** I ask the member for Wentworth North to consider withdrawing his unparliamentary language.

**Mr Skarica:** If I used any, I apologize, but it just infuriates me to hear the sanctimonious talk from the other side when they tried to bankrupt the province.  
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**Mrs Pupatello:** It's always with pleasure that we sit and listen to the member for Nickel Belt talk about his views of what the government is doing. Coming from Windsor-Sandwich, where we had an NDP member, I remember the kinds of policies that drove me as an individual to consider running for the Liberal Party. We had a lot to say about the negatives of an NDP government. If we had to put it on a scale, yes, they had a lot of problems, and that made me run, but in the face of what we're dealing with now, I agree with just about everything the member for Nickel Belt said. I was very happy to sit and listen and would listen to more.

Some of the other commentary that we hear, the new members of government have to have a good look at what those lists are when they talk about expenses. They have to understand that they've got to compare new member expenses to those who have been here before or those who have other duties as well. There is a whole bunch of issues that will ultimately determine what the expenses are for members' offices. If the member is not prepared to stand up and give a full description, it's really incumbent on him not to bring the issue up at all. Frankly, I'm surprised, because the member of government usually tends to be quite reasonable in all his deliberations that I've heard so far.

*Interjections.*

**Mrs Pupatello:** I congratulate the member for Nickel Belt and I look forward to more of his dialogue this evening.

**The Acting Speaker:** I remind all members that interjections are out of order, and even more so, if that's possible, if you're not in your own seat.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York):** I was intrigued by some comments of the member for Wentworth North. It's incredible with what passion they can speak about the things they are doing, as if they are something the people out there are necessarily enjoying. Think of this: You're taking \$8.3 billion out of the economy. The government is an important player in the economy. You will have taken, by next year, \$8.3 billion.

Think of what downsizing means to the people of Ontario. It means greater unemployment, which we've been suffering for the last many years, and the result of your downsizing as well as the private sector downsizing, which means people are being fired, is serious, serious unemployment; the result is that people don't have money to spend.

**Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel):** You spent it all.

**Mr Marchese:** One of the members said we spent it all. Imagine the courage they have to give an income tax cut to people in Ontario. What does this income tax cut mean? It means it will put us into debt by approximately another \$20 billion. You speak of that as having the courage to help the little guy out there, young children who are going to grow up into a future when you, through your income tax, are going to take out of the economy approximately \$20 billion. You speak of that as courage: courage to further unemploy the people of



Ontario, courage to create greater poverty in this province, courage to create greater homelessness in Toronto and all parts of Ontario. That courage causes greater poverty, greater unemployment and puts more and more people out of a job who won't be able to feed their families. That's not courage.

**The Acting Speaker:** The member's time has expired.  
*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** The level of noise is certainly accelerating in the chamber.

The member for Nickel Belt has two minutes to respond.

**Mr Laughren:** I wanted to thank the member for Lake Nipigon for his comments and the member for Windsor-Sandwich for her comments as well — I appreciate that — and the member for Fort York —

**Mr Tilson:** And the member for Wentworth North.

**Mr Laughren:** Jeez, you're impatient — and to the member for Wentworth North for his classy comments on expenditures of members and defence of members in his own party who hadn't been here a full year when the reporting of that expense account came down. He's comparing people who've been reported for a 12-month period versus those who were reported for considerably less than a 12-month period because the election wasn't until June and they didn't get into office until later that month.

As well, of course, you've got the cabinet minister — using Al Leach as an example of anything I find bizarre, but anyway, using him as an example of someone —

*Interjection.*

**Mr Laughren:** I got that line from Al Palladini, so leave me alone. Cabinet ministers don't have all the expenses that backbenchers have because a lot of it is picked up in their ministries.

Finally, for the member for Wentworth North to be using such sanctimonious language when I could point out members of his government like the member for Grey-Owen Sound, I would ask the member for Wentworth North to check the mileage of the member for Grey-Owen Sound and you tell me that's an honest reporting. Tell me that, my friend, before you get on your sanctimonious high horse telling everybody else what they're doing wrong.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Bradley:** I appreciate the opportunity to speak once again, as I'm paid to do by the constituents of St Catharines, on matters of importance, including Bill 47.

Bill 47 is necessitated, of course, because the government has embarked upon a course of action which involves a 30% tax cut, one which will benefit largely the most wealthy people in our society.

If you're a bank president, for instance — I just use that as an example — you're liable to get a huge decrease in the amount of taxes you pay. If you are a person who's close to minimum wage, it is unlikely that you're going to get much in terms of real dollars.

I know the government will spin this out and put in their literature that they put out to people that somehow the percentage is greater for those at the lowest end, but while it is a large percentage, perhaps it is a low number, and the people who will benefit most are the richest people in this province.

If I were among the richest people in this province and I didn't at the same time have a social conscience, I would be applauding this government, but I think I would not be applauding the government if I had a social conscience even were I a person of considerable means.

One of the issues that is emerging now, I think of great significance, is the issue of job losses. Those job losses are taking place at a time when some companies are making unprecedented profits.

We understood in years gone by, when companies laid people off, when companies closed, when companies downsized and the company was losing money — losing a lot of money — people didn't like that, but they understood it. Today, we have circumstances where major employers are downsizing at a tremendous rate. People are being cast out into the street. Why is this happening? It's happening because the companies want to make an even greater profit.

I want to see companies make profit. That's good for us. If companies in this province are doing well and making a profit, I think that's good. We've got a lot of good business people who have built their corporations, who have built their businesses, who have built their companies through hard work and some considerable expertise and they have been successful and they've employed a lot of people.

Where the problem arises today is that these companies are now laying people off. Why? Is it because they're not making a profit? No. The profit in fact is quite impressive, in some cases unprecedented. The reason they're laying off is because they want to make even a greater profit than they did in the past so it looks good on the stock market, and it does for approximately several months to a year, but after that it evens out. It may please the shareholders, but it certainly doesn't help our society as a whole.

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I wanted to touch briefly, because the member for Nickel Belt did, on a rather interesting subject. There was a report that came out this week which indicates the expenses that are incurred by members of the assembly. I'm an individual who does not look at other people's expenditures and make a judgement or determination. However, I heard the member for Wentworth North tonight making some rather interesting comments — and rather dangerous comments, I might add, at the same time.

I have registered against my name the lowest expenditures of any member in this House for the past three, four or five years. I've never stated that in this House previous to this. I've never made any issue of this in the assembly or anywhere else. I have, in fact, defended other people in the Legislative Assembly when I've been speaking to members of the news media, because they have different circumstances.

The member for Lake Nipigon is in the House tonight. The member for Lake Nipigon has a riding which is as big as or bigger than most countries in Europe. He has to travel around; he has to use long-distance telephone far more than I do. I have a very compact, urban riding. The expenses I would ever incur as an individual within the riding are minuscule compared to what he would have to incur.



Yet, you will read in the newspaper that somebody has a higher allocation of expenses. There are lot of good reasons for that. They live at a greater distance; perhaps they have to have accommodation here. In many cases, there are constituency expenses which are far greater than for some of us who are fortunate enough to have compact urban ridings.

So enough said about that. I just became annoyed when I heard the member for Wentworth North criticize not me or anybody else but other members of the assembly. I think you have to be very cautious on that and look at the individual circumstances facing each member.

I also want to go back to the issue of jobs and the loss of jobs for people in our society.

**Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound):** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: I understand the member for Nickel Belt has challenged my credibility, and I ask him if he would like to come to my office and look at my record; any time, they're open for him. If he wants to challenge my credibility in this House as to my accounting, then he should be doing that and coming to my office and not doing it in here. What he's calling me, Mr Speaker, is a liar —

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Order. The member doesn't have a point of privilege.

**Mr Murdoch:** This member has challenged my credibility. You don't believe this is a point of privilege? Well I do, Mr Speaker, and I'm challenging the member for Nickel Belt. If he would like to come to my office right now, we'll go over my records and I'll show him what I do in my riding.

**The Speaker:** Order. Order.

**Mr Murdoch:** I'm ashamed to say — I thought he was my friend, and for him to —

**The Speaker:** Order. Will the member take his seat.

**Mr Laughren:** On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: I must say that the remarks that I made were prompted by some rather stupid remarks by the member for Wentworth North. So you might want to have a talk with him about what his views are. As far as me looking over your records, I have no interest in doing that; I think the Provincial Auditor should.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. The member take his seat. The member for St Catharines has the floor.

**Mr Bradley:** I wish to get on to a different subject in any event, and that is the corporate concentration that's taking place in the province and, in fact, in the country and the toll that it is taking on working people in this province, people who are employed by various employers, be it the public or the private sector.

I look at what I think is something that's unhealthy for our democratic system, and that is the concentration of power in the newspaper business in the hands of one individual or one particular company. I've always wanted to see a lot of competition in the private sector — as much as possible. I think competition has worked well in many cases to ensure that we have efficiency and to ensure that we have — the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale looks disbelieving, but I have always believed that competition can be of great benefit. However, what we have seen in this particular case —

**Mr Laughren:** You guys can dish it out, but you can't take it.

**Mr Murdoch:** No, no, I can take it any time I want.

**Mr Laughren:** You are so freaky, Bill.

**The Speaker:** Order. The member for Grey-Owen Sound will have to come to order.

**Mr Murdoch:** What about the member for Nickel Belt?

**The Speaker:** Order. I won't warn the member for Grey-Owen Sound again. It's over. The member for St Catharines.

**Mr Bradley:** Thank you again, Mr Speaker.

I find the concentration of power in the news media, particularly in the print media, in the hands of one company or individual to be extremely unhealthy. It's unhealthy, first of all, for the business in which they're involved because we had one individual, in this case Conrad Black, who was able to take over, in effect, Southam; 58 out of 104 major daily newspapers in this country. This was done, of course, behind closed doors.

I thought it was best described by John Miller, who wrote an op ed piece in the Toronto Star. Mr Miller, by the way, is an individual who is involved in journalism, teaches journalism at Ryerson. He had an interesting description of what was happening. He said:

"The month of May has turned the Canadian newspaper industry upside down: Owners have dealt hundred-year-old papers like playing cards. Publishers and editors have been fired. And cost-cutting is threatening the existence of one of our most important national news institutions, the Canadian Press."

I stop there because today we have news that Canadian Press is indeed in trouble, because Southam, which is now under the control of Conrad Black, has decided that it is going to pull out of Canadian Press. Over the years, Canadian Press has provided an outstanding service for people across this country, for small communities such as yours up in Simcoe county, Mr Speaker, and various other small communities across this country. It is one of those institutions which has kept us together. Even in terms of radio, with Broadcast News, which is related to Canadian Press, we have been able to keep in touch with each other in this country. That is going to be lost, along with a lot of jobs at Canadian Press.

Mr Miller goes on to a rather interesting description, and an accurate one:

"When the dust cleared, one man, Conrad Black, controlled more daily papers than any person in this country's history. And it happened almost before we knew it, because newspaper ownership in Canada has become so concentrated — some would say saturated — that all of the 34 properties he bought changed hands" — and listen to this — "privately in boardrooms without the bother of competitive bidding and with no possibility the new owners will be people who actually live in the communities being served."

"Why should Canadians care about this, and what should we do?"

"We should care because Canada's newspapers have contracted with their readers to operate in the public interest. In return for an owner's right to make money delivering news and opinion, we expect him to provide



information that is accurate, comprehensive, diverse, timely, fair and of service to the community. We expect him, in other words, to have a motive beyond just making money. Because an informed citizenry is essential to make our democracy work, freedom of the press is enshrined in our Charter of Rights and Freedoms. And because it's important for Canadians to speak for themselves, we have tax laws that restrict" ourselves in many ways.

"Twice in the past 25 years, Canadians have been warned that this delicate bargain is unravelling, and each time we have ignored it. In 1969, a Senate committee headed by Keith Davey said: 'This country should no longer tolerate a situation where the public interest in so vital a field as information is dependent on the greed or goodwill of an extremely privileged group of businessmen.' At the time, group owners controlled 58% of the daily newspaper circulation.

"In 1981, when that figure had risen to 77%, Tom Kent's royal commission proposed sweeping remedies for what it called the 'undue concentration of ownership.'

"Today, the figure tops 93% by my count, and the number of corporate players has shrunk to a handful, with Black as the lead player.

"We should care because the acquisitive Black, who professes to be a great friend of Canadian journalism, nevertheless now finds himself in the same position as you or I if we were to suddenly buy three houses on a social worker's salary. Our prime motivation should be cash flow to pay the mortgages, not good works.

"Facing a long-term debt of \$700 million, even before his buying binge, is Black in any position to invest in good journalism? The sounds you hear are editorial knees quaking in Southam newsrooms from Vancouver to Montreal."

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The article goes on to describe the circumstances that are facing us, where one individual is going to be controlling so much of the news media. If people in this assembly or people in this country believe that's healthy, I tell you it is not.

What has happened at the newspapers that have been acquired by Hollinger? If we look at the Saskatoon Star-Phoenix, if we look at the Regina Leader-Post, both of which were making money, both of which were making a profit, the first thing that Hollinger did when it went in was to chop staff drastically. So a lot of people lost their jobs. It was alleged that the newspaper could still do its job every bit as well as it did previous to that; I contend that is not the case.

The St Catharines Standard was owned for many years by a family, the Burgoyne family, who saw it as a privilege they had. They were good community people owning the newspaper, who over the years contributed a lot financially and otherwise to the community of St Catharines and to the Niagara region. What has happened is that it has become part of the Southam chain.

What is more worrisome is that Hollinger has taken over. How many of those jobs will disappear? I can tell you now that there are people working downstairs in the press room who will be losing their jobs. There are people in all parts of that operation — in the office, in

delivery, in circulation, in the newsroom, in sports — in all aspects who are losing their jobs as a result of the takeover, and more will lose their jobs, I contend, ultimately when Hollinger, or at least Conrad Black, takes over full control. Is this good for the community? In my view it is not, because there will be fewer resources to deal with community affairs. There is one voice corporately which will heavily dominate the Canadian scene. Yet I see nobody who wants to do anything about it.

I asked the Minister of Economic Development, a good fellow, the other day in the House what he thought of this. Immediately, he said that the government would not intervene. I asked for an opinion, as I did when I spoke to the Premier one time in a question in the House, about this whole issue of people losing jobs. Where are those jobs going to be? When the Premier went to Davos, Switzerland, one of the major issues when all of the big shots got together — I say "big shots" in a nice way; they're the major political leaders and corporate leaders who gathered together in Davos. When they gathered there, one of the topics they talked about, one of the major speeches by the sponsor was about where the jobs are going to be. How can we as a society justify constantly reorganizing and downsizing when there are already major profits being made?

If there's money lost, one understands it. Right now, the Ontario Public Service Employees Union is going through a very difficult time. They are having to do many of the things this government has done, just as sometimes the corporate sector has. But in their case, they are not making money; they are losing money very significantly and they don't have the sources, and they are not giving a tax cut.

Where we have a circumstance where a company is making a lot of money and still throwing its employees out into the streets simply because it wants to make an even greater profit, then I think our society should speak out about this and those of us who are representative should.

I was looking at a photograph today of rather glum-looking people. It says, "Staffers Listen with Worry to the Announcement that Canadian Press May Fold." These are people who work for Canadian Press and have given good service over the years right across this country. When I see Canadian Press, a genuine national institution out there, losing its place in our society, I think that does not bode well for democracy and certainly for the news media at large.

There are a number of issues that come forward as a result of this bill we have before us.

First of all, we have mentioned as the Liberal Party the issue of tuition in this province once again going up. It is not just that the tuition is going to go up by approximately 20% this year, but it's at the same time that young people don't have the same opportunity to get jobs as they have in the past. Those jobs simply aren't there.

In the past, you might have been able to say to some of them, "Well, General Motors is hiring a large number of people," or Stelco or other major employers who over the years were very good at hiring young people, university and college students, and helping them out, paying them quite lucratively in fact and allowing them to pay



for their own education. Those jobs simply are no longer there, and I become concerned for those students. What we will have in this province is something where we go back to the bad old days when only the children of the wealthy can go to college and university, something that happens very often in the United States, a country that is admired by many in the Conservative caucus.

Here, we've had popular public education that has probably put many of the people who are on the government side and the opposition side through university, has allowed them that opportunity so that they could better themselves in terms of their employment opportunities and gain all of the advantages of education. Now you're going to put the tuition up again. It's already gone up 42% since 1990, and now you're going to put it up 20% more. I think that's most unfair to those students.

I look at the fact that you're cutting food inspectors in this province. I can't believe you would do that. I come back to a point I've made before: that both farmers and consumers have a vested interest in those people being retained, but because you have to have this tax cut, because you have to do extraordinary things to try to balance your budget because of the tax cut, we're laying off inspectors.

That could have the effect of making consumers less confident in our food supply from this province. That could hurt our farmers. Our farmers by and large want these inspectors on the job. They want to have that background. They want to be able to say to consumers in our province, "We have these inspectors; our food's been inspected."

There are a lot of random inspections taking place. You can be assured that we have reduced the risk in this province of any problems with our food supply, and yet the Minister of Agriculture is being forced to lay those people off. Now question marks are going to be out there and that's most unfortunate, because we have had good food supplied by our farmers for so long.

Today the member for Fort William, the leader of the official opposition, raised an issue with a good deal of passion in the House, and that was the report of the commission on hospital restructuring. We warned when Bill 26 came about that it allowed for the establishment of a commission on hospital restructuring that had unprecedented power. What has happened today? They've cut the beds in Fort William by approximately half; they've closed hospitals; they've closed the psychiatric hospital. Nobody heard a thing about that during the election campaign. Nobody was under the impression that the Conservative government would be responsible for closing whole hospitals and large parts of hospitals. That's exactly what's happening and that's why we in this assembly should never, never have allowed the government to place that power in the hands of an independent commission, totally outside the popular will of this assembly.

That's what Bill 26 was all about. If you wondered why the opposition took extraordinary action, perhaps even unprecedented action in this House during the period of time of the discussion of that bill, it was for that very reason, so that we could have public hearings across this province so people could have input from a

variety of fields, either in favour of the bill or against the bill. As a result, the government itself had, I know, over 50 amendments to its own legislation. I contend that we would not have had those amendments had we not had those hearings.

One of the areas we were really concerned about was that of hospital restructuring. As I listened to the Niagara District Health Council in my area talk about going through an exercise of restructuring and a discussion of rationalization and reorganization, I started to become apprehensive. We have some good people on the Niagara District Health Council, but they're not the commission. The commission's independent of that. The commission can come in, as it did up in the area where Lyn McLeod is the member, and simply ignore all the good work that has been done for the last three years and impose its settlement on it.

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For those who were applauding when the Premier replied — and I know it's your job on the government benches to applaud the Premier when he replies, but I ask whether you'll be applauding when they do it to your community. It's going to happen across this province. More hospitals will close. There will be more mergers of hospitals.

Nobody at all is saying that you can remain the same. I know the spin doctors in the government offices have told you to say to everybody and to us, "Are you for the status quo?" Of course we're not for the status quo. Few people are, and we recognize the changes. I commend the government when it has put some money into the community for the purpose of services at home. We've had an allocation in the Niagara region for that purpose and I think that's positive. I would not be critical there. I want to make that clear. I am critical of the government allowing this commission to come in and impose its will. The community is totally upset and disrupted by what is happening.

In our own hospital we have another circumstance. The Minister of Health is a person who brags about how much work has been done in kidney dialysis. I can tell you at the Hotel Dieu Hospital in St Catharines we have far more dialysed patients than the hospital is receiving funding for. It looks good, and there was an expansion thanks to the former Minister of Health, the honourable member for Beaches-Woodbine. There was an announcement made that there would be an expansion of the renal dialysis facility, but they're not getting the money for it.

It's like getting an MRI. We're delighted to have an MRI in the community, but you should know that only \$150,000 of that is paid per year by the provincial government and the whole cost of the renovations and the MRI has to be raised by the local community. If you're a community that's lucky enough to have that kind of money in it, I guess that's fine, but if you aren't, you're in some considerable trouble.

The issue of rent control has come forward. We have canvassed that in this House again. If I had knocked on doors and asked people, "Do you think the Conservative government will be ending rent control?" — because that's what you're doing; you're really ending rent control, whether you say it or not — most people would



have said no. It's not an easy subject; landlords have some problems as well that have to be addressed. But what you're really doing, make no mistake about it, no matter what the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has to say, good fellow that he is, is ending rent control. I think you're going to see a lot of people suffer as a result of that.

The International Joint Commission report came out today, and those of us who represent constituencies adjacent to the Great Lakes were alarmed by the report because it indicates that it sees governments, including our provincial government, cutting the efforts to deal with the contaminants in Lake Ontario. It takes a lot of staff to deal with this. It takes money to invest in sewage treatment plants. It takes a lot of monitoring to be done. It takes a mammoth effort. You know, for once we were seeing some progress. I signed an agreement as Minister of the Environment with the Honourable Tom McMillan some time ago to deal with Great Lakes cleanup.

Essentially, though, most of the work in this area is done by states and provinces — in this case it's essentially the province of Ontario — and I see the minister sitting in a ministry that's losing \$200 million, losing about 700 staff, losing all of the resources and weakening the regulations. How can that possibly comply with any agreements that have been signed over the years between the various jurisdictions for cleaning up the Great Lakes, including the Niagara River where the minister has just disbanded the team that was responsible for the monitoring and the cleanup of the Niagara River?

The Niagara River has adjacent to it one of the most toxic dumps you're going to find anywhere in the world. The largest single concentration of dioxin is located in the Hyde Park dump and there have been seeps into that river over the years. What does the minister do? Does she address it? Does she at least maintain the present effort? No, they disband it. The people of Toronto, for instance, have that as drinking water. That doesn't mean tomorrow everybody's going to have dioxin in their drinking water — it doesn't mean that necessarily — but what it means is that those contaminants will continue to make their way into those waterways, and it increases the risk significantly for the recreational and drinking water supply all over Lake Ontario. This government has made a conscious effort, because it's so intent on giving a 30% tax cut particularly to the rich people in this province that it's prepared to make that sacrifice.

I want to say as well that there is another issue. The Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism is a person who's had some experience in rowing. I know he is very supportive — there are about four ministers who are involved in this — of appropriate funding for something that I think can be of great benefit to our province financially and otherwise, and so is the member for Beaches-Woodbine, and that is the cleanup of the Martindale Pond; the restoration of the Martindale Pond on which the Henley rowing course is located. The federal government has put in its one third, the local government has put in its one third; we wait for the provincial government.

I am confident that there are enough people on the other side of the House, particularly Minister Saunderson,

who knows of the sport of rowing and knows of the importance of having international games — in this case the world rowing championship, held right here in Ontario — and that he will be very supportive of that; that there will be money forthcoming from the Ministry of Environment and Energy, the ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, perhaps the Ministry of Transportation, and any other ministry possible.

I look forward to the province joining with the federal government and with the local government and with people from the private sector in providing adequate funding for that purpose. When they do so, of course, people in St Catharines and people in Ontario will know that we will benefit financially by all the people who will be visiting the Niagara Peninsula, the province of Ontario and our country of Canada, leaving millions of dollars here, leaving a rowing course in great shape and improving a waterway environmentally. The province, I think in that case, could be justifiably proud of its record in that specific area if it were to allocate those funds.

**The Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** It's always a pleasure to rise in response to a speech by the member for St Catharines. I would say to him that he's probably wrong that there are a lot of people on the Conservative side of the House who are interested in what he's had to say. There don't appear to be many to me.

One of the issues here is that this is an extraordinarily important bill. The implications, as the member for St Catharines has pointed out, are really tremendous in many, many different areas. What we really are seeing here in this House is the effect of policies by this government that in fact are driving a wedge between the people of Ontario. The member is quite right to talk about the real issues that are hidden within this bill and the necessity that we have to examine it thoroughly to ensure that the people of Ontario understand how serious are many of the issues that have been raised.

The member also mentioned a lot of other issues and it's impossible to comment on all of the things that are exercising him tonight. I dare say we share his concerns that many of the people living in Ontario are beginning to appreciate the extent to which this government is changing the fabric of our society. While I agree with him that there are still some good things in Ontario, and certainly the athletes he was referring to are some of them, one of the realities is that we are having an increasingly difficult time maintaining the quality of life that all of us have tried so hard to build. The changes that are included in this act and in many of the others this government has brought forward are eroding that quality of life to an extent that is really quite distressing for many of us. As time goes on, more and more people in Ontario will understand that this affects us all and is of concern to us all.

**The Speaker:** Further questions or statements? There being none, the member for St Catharines has up to two minutes to reply.

**Mr Bradley:** I appreciate the comments of the member for London Centre, who has a long commitment to those who are disadvantaged in our province and has spoken many times in this House about those individuals. I guess



at the conclusion of this session, as we are concluding this evening, we could look back at what has happened over the past year — they had a celebration at Varsity Arena the other night and I'm sure there were a lot of people of much substance and wealth who gathered together, and other good Conservatives who wanted to celebrate. One always allows for that celebration and we always wish people well.

What we are seeing in this province, I'm afraid, is the Americanization of Ontario — Americanization at its worst rather than its best. There are many good things about the country south of the border, but one of them is not how it is moving further and further apart; the poles are moving further and further apart; how the most wealthy and the most advantaged people in the society are gaining at the expense of those who are the most disadvantaged.

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Even if people on the other side of the House don't have much sympathy for adults, I think you must always look at the children. We have a responsibility for those children who are in fact innocent, regardless of what you might think of the way in which their parents have conducted themselves, the work ethic they happen to have or the lifestyle they happen to live. There are always those children. If we're going to give those children any kind of opportunity, we must provide for them. We can't simply be taking away from them, as we are in education, as we are in health care, as we are in social services.

As we are in the conclusion of our session, I hope the government will think long and hard about that over this summer.

**The Speaker:** Further debate? Seeing no further debate, the third reading of Bill 47.

All those in favour of third reading of Bill 47 standing in the name of Mr Eves, say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

#### SAFETY AND CONSUMER STATUTES ADMINISTRATION ACT, 1996

#### LOI DE 1996 SUR L'APPLICATION DE CERTAINES LOIS TRAITANT DE SÉCURITÉ ET DE SERVICES AUX CONSOMMATEURS

Mr Sterling moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 54, An Act to provide for the delegation of the administration of certain designated statutes to designated administrative authorities and to provide for certain limitation periods in those statutes / Projet de loi 54, Loi prévoyant la délégation de l'application de certaines lois désignées à des organismes d'application désignés et prévoyant certains délais de prescription dans ces lois.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Do we have some opening remarks on Bill 54?

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations):** I would just like to make

a few remarks with regard to this bill. I want to thank all of the people who have participated during debate on this bill, and especially those from the private sector who appeared before the justice committee on Monday and Tuesday of this week. I think all of these individuals, representative of a wide variety of organizations that have an interest in this legislation, made a valuable contribution.

Naturally, I want to especially commend those who supported us in this legislation. They included such esteemed organizations as the consumer council of Canada, the Canadian Automobile Association, the Ontario Real Estate Association, motor vehicle dealer associations, and representatives from the elevator and amusement ride industries. In addition, even those who were somewhat critical are to be thanked for their time, effort and thoughtful input.

I just want to summarize by saying that the legislation we are discussing today, Bill 54, is not about deregulation but about self-management. What we have proposed is simply the transferring of responsibility for administering regulations from government to a non-profit organization. In doing so, the government will continue as a watchdog, ensuring the delegated responsibilities are properly fulfilled rather than delivering them directly. We believe this will then allow the government — in this case my ministry, the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations — to focus more of its attention on results rather than on technical procedures and delivery mechanisms. The bottom line will lead to better protection for the consumers and better safety standards for the people of Ontario.

In conclusion, I want to express my appreciation to all members of this House who have contributed thoughtfully and helpfully during the debate on Bill 54.

**The Speaker:** Questions and comments? Further debate? The member for Welland-Thorold.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold):** The New Democrats are going to be voting against this legislation. This is yet more of the flim-flammy that's being passed off under any number of guises by this government. It's typical of the sort of stuff that's flowed out of cabinet office over the last 12 months plus.

Marion Boyd and myself spent the mere two days in committee hearings, listening to people talk about Bill 54 and what it meant in a relevant way, both to the industries that ought to be regulated — and the government hasn't gone so far as to say that they shouldn't be regulated; the government doesn't say that, but that's what they mean by virtue of the legislation.

It's been spoken of in many ways by many people. One of the most eloquent submissions made to the committee was that by Tim Little from OPSEU who talked clearly and he reflected the views of many, if not most, and that was that this is putting the fox in charge of the chicken coop. It's putting Dracula in charge of the blood bank. We're talking here about industries that historically — we're speaking of motor vehicle dealers, real estate agents and brokers, we're speaking of travel agents, we're talking about cemetery operators. But let me restrict the comments to the first three because they're far more relevant.



We're talking about businesses, services that in terms of consumers are the second- or third-largest purchases that consumers make in their lifetimes — well, first, in the case of real estate. We're talking about industries which historically have been occupied by well-meaning, legitimate and integrous operators. The fact is, we have laws to protect people from the less than well-meaning and less than integrous. That's why we have regulation of these industries. The public deserves to be protected and that's what the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations should be all about.

But we've got a government over here that's going to abandon the consumer in the province of Ontario. It's going to say, "You're on your own." The minister's got "Caveat emptor" written across his forehead because that's all that's going to be left. You're on your own because this government has no interest in regulating industries that can be very predatory on the innocent and naïve and industries that — although I again acknowledge that the vast majority of participants are legitimate, integrous operators — have also been plagued throughout the years by players who would abuse the positions that they're in to scam people, to swindle people, to take their money, to rob them, to commit frauds of any number of sorts.

Look, there isn't one of us in this chamber who doesn't have letter after letter from victims of the unscrupulous operators. Darn right. My friend the member from Ottawa knows that. He's got those letters on his desk. He's reflecting on their content right now, even though here we are at 8 in the evening on Thursday, June 27. Letter after letter from people who have been victimized; again, not the majority of consumers; the minority of consumers, no two ways about it, the people who have been preyed upon by unscrupulous operators within these industries. The industries themselves and the performers in those industries want a regulatory body which is legitimate and which is arm's-length because that enhances the image of the industry in the eyes of the public.

One of the arguments advanced by the minister, Mr Sterling, was that the creation of these self-regulatory bodies was going to reduce red tape. That's one of the themes that the government has been working on from day one. "I've got to reduce red tape." What was remarkable, though, was when Ms Boyd and I questioned the minister while he was there with his senior bureaucrats, including the ADM, Art Daniels, as to what kind of red tape, exactly what is it that this legislation is going to relieve either the industry or the consumer of, there were some muttering and stuttering and stumbling and humming and hawing, until finally Mr Daniels said, "Well, registrants will be able to do that electronically," the same way some people do their income tax. You go to the accountant or to H&R Block and they file electronically. Mind you, I've asked my accountant not to do that because that reduces jobs up in Sudbury where they take the income tax returns. I want my accountant to file my return on paper because I want real people doing real work for real wages.

But the ADM said, "Oh, no, we'll have electronic filing." I said: "Why can't the government do that? Why is it necessary to turn control of the industry over to the

industry itself to achieve that?" Quite frankly, nobody had an answer. It was a matter of shrugging and going, "Gosh, maybe they could." And when I asked participants, players in the industry about the red tape they thought they were going to be relieved of as a result of this Bill 54, this anti-consumer legislation, once again, players — some of the big players in the industry — sat there and scratched their heads and said, "Well, there really isn't that much red tape now."

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What's the red tape? If you're a player, if you're a car salesperson, if you're a real estate salesperson, if you're a travel agent, you've got to be registered. So you've still got to fill out your registration form and you've got to, of course, enclose your cheque because after all, you are dealing with government. This government had been picking up non-tax revenues left and right, user fees, call them what you will, and at the end of the day, that's the red tape people are talking about.

Everybody, be it motor vehicle dealers, be it real estate associations, be it the travel industry — the CAA was there speaking. They're big players in the travel industry. They said, "Well, we don't know what the minister is talking about when he says "reduce red tape." So you see, it really isn't an anti-red tape measure.

Ms Boyd and I thought, "Well, surely then it's got to be in the interest of saving somebody some money somewhere." Because we pointed out, the numbers were there. The minister was very candid. We appreciated Mr Sterling's candour during these very modest committee hearings. Lord knows, they should have travelled about the province so that there could have been real consultation. One of the criticisms of Bill 54 was that it was all done behind closed doors. It was done in secret, in the dark back rooms of the Harris government, because at the end of the day it was revealed quite clearly that nobody was really spoken to; none of the consumer associations were spoken to, none of them were participants in identifying problems and then solutions. No.

We didn't get a meaningful, relevant consumer protection act, which is sorely needed in this province and which has been needed for a number of years, going back to the days of before the last government when there was a draft consumer protection act sitting around which gathered dust, and rightly so because the thing was the most pathetic, toothless, ineffective, irrelevant piece of fluff one could ever encounter. Those were the Liberals.

I acknowledge that the last government didn't develop a consumer protection act in a state that it could be brought forward to the House — again, for any number of reasons, and I regret that didn't happen. But with Mr Sterling's experience here at Queen's Park — he's been in government, he's been in opposition, he's a long-time member of the Legislature. To say he's mature is to say the least, and over the years, the many years, that he served his community, he undoubtedly has had — albeit not statistical, merely anecdotal — Speaker, you're well aware of what I'm talking of; I know you are. I see you nodding in acknowledgement that it's pathetic that we're dealing with Bill 54, this abandonment, this abdication.

Speaker, I caution you. You're supposed to be non-partisan and I wish you wouldn't agree with me with



such vigour when I address this. I don't want to get you into difficulty with the government caucus, because the Speaker is supposed to be non-partisan, and when I see the Speaker nodding so enthusiastically in agreement with what I admit are very partisan remarks about relatively meaningless legislation, I appreciate your support, Speaker, for our position. I remind you, you can't vote on this, but when New Democrats vote in opposition to Bill 54, we'll be thinking of you as well.

One of the things we talked about when we talked to the players was, what about the prospect of reducing the cost to somebody, anybody? There were a lot of heads nodding, like those little dogs in the back ledge of the car as it turns a corner anywhere here in the province of Ontario, big city, small town. People were saying, "Maybe it will reduce costs." Because you see, what the ministry told us is that the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations has been a little bit — not just with this government — of a cash cow. It has. It generates a profit.

Mind you, of course, that means it's being targeted for dismantling. By God, with this government, anything that's publicly owned or operated that generates a profit, dismantle it and hand it over to your friends in the private sector, just like the LCBO. Don't forget, when we examine Bill 54, it's coming from the same minister and ministry that wants to sell off the public ownership of the Liquor Control Board of Ontario and that wants to see out of work the 5,000-plus hardworking women and men who work in the LCBO, all members of the Ontario Liquor Board Employees' Union.

Think about this: They want to sell it off; they want to dump it; they want to get rid of it. Truly. But the LCBO, owned by the people of Ontario last year, made profits of \$630 million. It employed those 5,000 working women and men with decent wages. This year it's going to probably make somewhere around \$680 million in profits, for the public of Ontario. These guys want to give it away to their rich friends, to the big corporate interests they are so intent on serving.

Here we are. The Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations, in the areas of regulation of real estate, travel and motor vehicle sales, one's left with the impression that there's something of a net profit in the range of \$4.9 million, that the revenues generated in terms of licensing and other fees collected exceed the cost of enforcement by almost \$5 million. Mr Skarica wants to come over and look at these figures, and by God, here they are in black and white. Come on over here, Mr Skarica.

**Mr Toni Skarica (Wentworth North):** I don't trust you, Peter.

**Mr Kormos:** Don't tell me. They came from your minister, so if you don't trust me when I relay them to you, you don't trust Norm Sterling. I've never questioned Norm Sterling's cash register honesty and I never would. I have no doubt that the numbers we got about the net revenues generated by the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations — Speaker, you know what I'm speaking of: cash, net revenues, profit, assets to the public of Ontario.

One of the questions posed to Mr Sterling by Ms Boyd and myself was, gosh, if you dismantle the regulatory

bodies that supervise real estate, travel and motor vehicle sales, the government's going to have to look somewhere else for that \$5 million. It figures. Norm Sterling, with his usual candour and I'm sure forthrightness, said: "No way. Don't worry. There won't be any substantial reduction in the revenues collected by the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations."

Can you believe it, Speaker? It's a level of candour you're not used to, I understand that. It's a level of forthrightness that may be foreign to you. But there Norm Sterling was in the committee saying: "Don't worry. The government's still going to collect darned close to that \$5 million in profits." We were concerned about the fact that they would be picking somebody's pocket to make up the difference, that they would be looking to yet more working people and make them pay the difference. Norm Sterling said, "No, the impact on net revenues by the privatization or regulation of these very important industries, the net revenues are going to be close to what they are now."

#### 2010

We started asking these industries about that. Here, we've got the CAA there, we've got Bill Davis and the motor vehicle dealers' association. Bill Davis was there. We had other people there who were participants in these industries saying: "Look, guys, you're already paying out this money now and you're paying it by way of licensing and fees to the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations. Norm Sterling tells us they're not going to collect substantially less money, but he also tells us that you as an industry are going to have to fully fund your privatized self-regulatory body, and that's going to cost too, right? So somebody's going to pay twice."

At the end of the day, we know who ends up paying. It's the consumer, it's the little people who are customers, who go out and buy houses, although Lord knows, the real estate market has been flat because even after a year of Tories we're seeing increasing unemployment and increasing mistrust in the economy. Young families down in Welland-Thorold where I'm from and quite frankly anywhere else across this province are loath, fearful of even considering investing in a home, because they don't know what their future holds in store.

Thank goodness that none of the women and men who worked in the foodservices here at Queen's Park signed a deal last month on the purchase of a new home, because they had the rug pulled from underneath them by a Harris Tory government that's creating yet more unemployment and that's hell-bent on devaluing work in this province, that has as its goal a big tax break for the very rich and the very profitable, and lowering of wages for the working people of this province who create the wealth that constitutes the profits.

New Democrats in the last government were faced with any number of phenomena that caused them to be subject to criticism from here or there or wherever, but by God, New Democrats in the last government and New Democrats have never told working people to suffer yet more unemployment, to be the subject of yet lower wages, to pay yet more user fees so that the wealthy could become richer and the big corporations could become more profitable.



We spoke with the industry and they started to acknowledge that the way it was being described by Mr Sterling was such that they became or were becoming fearful as well of the prospect of having to pay yet more. There's a scam going on here, a little con job — not so little because you're talking about millions of dollars. We're talking about somebody at the end of the day having to pay more, which is so typical of this government. They promised no new user fees. They promised no user fees for health care. A broken promise. They probably never intended it when they said it. What would that make them? When you say something that you don't intend to do even when you say it, what does that make you? It's the L-word.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** I would remind the speaker that you can't infer something you don't want to say. I would just like you to get on with the debate.

**Mr Kormos:** Speaker, I would never infer something I don't want to say. I would imply it and let the audience infer, but I would never infer it. It's up to you folks out there to draw the inference based on what I'm implying. I understand you, Speaker. I appreciate the caution.

They promised no new fees. They promised a tax break and created an illusion that all of us — our folks, our retired parents, our kids going to university or college or school — were going to have more cash in our pockets. That's what they told us. As it ends up, there's going to be more cash in some people's pockets, but it's going to be the Frank Stronachs and the Tubby Blacks and the Babs Amiels of this province who are going to be walking around with more cash, as if they needed it.

It's going to be working folks and the unemployed who are going to be paying. Just like with Bill 54, it's going to be the consumer who's going to pay. But they're not just to pay in terms of the dollars and cents. Oh no, because they're going to pay by having wrested from them, by being stripped of whatever modest consumer protection there was for ordinary people here in the province of Ontario. One of the concerns expressed by at least one consumer advocates' group is that these hearings were held so briefly and so speedily there was no real opportunity for the consumer groups to prepare.

Let me leave it at this: We're going to oppose Bill 54. Mr Christopherson just slapped his watch.

**Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre):** No, it's okay.

**Mr Kormos:** Mr Christopherson has stopped slapping his watch.

**Mrs Boyd:** Keep talking, Peter.

**Mr Kormos:** Mr Christopherson slapped his watch again. We're going to oppose it because Mr Christopherson is pointing to his timepiece. We're going to oppose it because, as OPSEU warned, this isn't about enhanced consumer protection; it's about abdicating the government's role for consumer protection. We're going to oppose it because it's going to generate more cost for consumers and we're going to oppose it because at the end of the day the real goal of Bill 54 is to destroy the jobs of hundreds of public sector workers, those represented by OPSEU, and to strip the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations of those hardworking, committed people who have done such a good job of super-

vising and regulating these industries and regulating and supervising and inspecting elevators and pressure vessels and amusement rides.

At the end of the day, the purpose of a privately owned, a corporately owned company is to make money. How do you make money? How do you make profits? By charging the most you can and delivering the least you can. It's just like insurance companies, it's just like banks; like the Toronto-Dominion Bank that sometimes even dips into people's private accounts on the basis of so-called monthly or biannual fees and carrying charges. Before you know it, you go back to the bank and your account's dry.

This government's privatizing regulation of these very important businesses. This government's abandoning the consumer. This government's destroying the role of important and valuable public sector workers. This government is betraying the public of Ontario. Any fair-minded, reasonable, intelligent member of this assembly must feel compelled to oppose this legislation. The people of Ontario don't deserve this being done to them after so much has already been done to them by this government over the course of the last 12 months.

**The Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I share, first of all, the member's concern that we are so concerned this evening that we must be out of this Legislature before the world ends. I think these pieces of legislation deserve very close scrutiny and I don't think they're going to get the scrutiny they should get at this time of the session.

Part of that is as a result of the fact that the government does not bring in its legislation at an early enough time in the session and tends to bring most of its legislation in, particularly that which would require some considerable debate, in the latter half of the sitting of that session. Therefore, some of the legislation that goes through does not get the kind of scrutiny I believe it should.

The member has outlined a number of matters that are of great concern to him. I know the member for York South, Mr Kennedy, in committee and in this House on second reading, certainly indicated clearly his opposition to certain provisions of this legislation. I agree that it was important for him to do so and I wish he would have the opportunity to do so once again.

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I also worry about the user fees that will result from this legislation. People are soon forgetting as well the circumstances that existed before we had these regulations and regulatory bodies, where there were some rather significant problems in the travel industry, where a lot of people lost their savings, savings they had gathered up for the purpose of a holiday; where we had problems with amusement rides in midways and at fairs. We need that kind of strong regulation and appropriate inspection.

There are many parts of this bill that are not going to be advantageous to the consumers of Ontario, and that is why we will be opposing this legislation.

**The Speaker:** Any further comments or statements? The member for Welland-Thorold has up to two minutes to respond.



**Mr Kormos:** I appreciate the comments of Mr Bradley, who has a long history of consumer advocacy in this Legislature, along with my predecessor, Mel Swart. The two of them shared many a drive and many a train — that's back when we had trains — from the Niagara region up here to Queen's Park. Mel Swart was as effective a consumer advocate and had as undying a commitment to advocacy on behalf of consumers as anybody could have. Jim Bradley shared that with him then and shares it now.

What's saddest about this is the apparent lack of interest and insight on the part of the Tory caucus. We've all been on the used car dealer's lot and we've all been with the real estate — mind you, I suppose I'm a little more benign about real estate agents than many would be because, after all, none of them persuaded me to buy a downtown Toronto condominium in 1984 as an investment.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Kormos:** It's true. I wasn't about to fall for that one, but talk to hundreds — no, thousands — of folks who fell for that back in the early and mid-1980s and you'll be surprised at how many people are still paying the price.

But what amazes and distresses me is the lack of interest and insight that Tory backbenchers have into this legislation and the lack of understanding they have about how dangerous it really is, because it's going to be their families and friends and neighbours who fall prey, who become victims of unscrupulous operators in these respective industries, and it's them and their families and friends who aren't going to have a regulatory body to look to for protection, because the industry regulating itself ain't going to work.

**The Speaker:** Further debate? Seeing none, Bill 54, standing in the name of Mr Sterling for third reading. All those in favour of the motion?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

#### CROWN FOUNDATIONS ACT, 1996 LOI DE 1996 SUR LES FONDATIONS DE LA COURONNE

Ms Bassett, on behalf of Mr Eves, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 71, An Act to encourage the financial support of Public Institutions by Individuals and the Private Sector through the establishment of Crown Foundations / Projet de loi 71, Loi visant à encourager le soutien financier des établissements publics par les particuliers et le secteur privé grâce à la création de fondations de la Couronne.

**Ms Isabel Bassett (St Andrew-St Patrick):** My comments are going to be very short because we have all spoken on this bill and we are all in agreement. I just want to say that since this initiative was announced in our economic statement last fall, there has been unanimous support from right across the province, everybody seeing it as a step in the right direction.

I want to thank my colleagues on both sides of the House for their support of this initiative and I look forward to seeing the results of some of the donations.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Further debate?

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** I want to take a minute to indicate that much of what is contained in this will of course be helpful in terms of getting a little bit more money for various organizations, for various crown foundations in the province, but the real reason we have this bill before us is because the government is cutting its own funding so much to hospitals, libraries, cultural agencies. Were the government not doing so, it would not be scrambling to give this crumb to these institutions.

As I indicated on second reading, this affects so few people. The federal change in legislation really covered this some time ago and, according to the information provided by the government itself, this is going to affect very few people in terms of donors. But because it affects anybody at all, we are prepared to be supportive of this legislation.

We are in this province moving rapidly towards a situation — and some people agree with this, particularly on the government benches — where people are going to have to rely on the benevolence of others in our society to obtain for them the kind of support for public institutions and for organizations that do such good work because government is abandoning its responsibility. We see a lot of that south of the border, we see a lot of that in many states in the United States, and what in effect it does is place people at the mercy of others in our society. We are fortunate that there are people who are prepared to give to these organizations, to make those kinds of donations which are very helpful, but again, the only reason we have such a need today is because this government has abdicated its responsibility on behalf of the people of this province to appropriately fund those organizations that have done such good work in the past.

**The Speaker:** Comments or statements? There being none, we are dealing with Bill 71, standing in the name of Mr Eves.

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

#### TAX CREDITS AND ECONOMIC STIMULATION ACT, 1996 LOI DE 1996 CRÉANT DES CRÉDITS D'IMPÔT ET VISANT À STIMULER L'ÉCONOMIE

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 70, An Act to provide Co-operative Education and Film Industry Tax Credits, to create Economic Growth, to implement other measures contained in the 1996 Budget and to amend certain Acts administered by the Minister of Finance / Projet de loi 70, Loi créant des crédits d'impôt pour l'éducation coopérative et l'industrie cinématographique, favorisant la croissance



économique, mettant en oeuvre d'autres mesures mentionnées dans le budget de 1996 et modifiant des lois dont l'application relève du ministre des Finances.

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader):** Mr Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent for the following motion: That the debate on second reading of Bill 70, the Tax Credits and Economic Stimulation Act, is deemed to have been concluded and that the question be now put.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed.

We're dealing with Bill 70, standing in the name of Mr Eves. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading? Agreed.

Orders of the day.

**Hon Mr Eves:** Mr Speaker, private members' bills 36 through 46.

2030

#### CITY OF OTTAWA ACT, 1996

Mrs Caplan, on behalf of Mr Grandmaître, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr34, An Act respecting the City of Ottawa.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mrs Caplan, on behalf of Mr Grandmaître, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr34, An Act respecting the City of Ottawa.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

#### ANGLO CANADA GENERAL INSURANCE COMPANY ACT, 1996

Mr Bob Wood moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr45, An Act respecting Anglo Canada General Insurance Company.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Bob Wood moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr45, An Act respecting Anglo Canada General Insurance Company.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

#### CITY OF OTTAWA ACT, 1996

Mrs Caplan, on behalf of Mr Grandmaître, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr47, An Act respecting the City of Ottawa.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mrs Caplan, on behalf of Mr Grandmaître, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr47, An Act respecting the City of Ottawa.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

#### CITY OF OTTAWA ACT, 1996

Mrs Caplan, on behalf of Mr Grandmaître, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr48, An Act respecting the City of Ottawa.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mrs Caplan, on behalf of Mr Grandmaître, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr48, An Act respecting the City of Ottawa.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

#### CITY OF TORONTO ACT (TRAFFIC CALMING), 1996

Ms Bassett moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr54, An Act respecting the City of Toronto.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Ms Bassett moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr54, An Act respecting the City of Toronto.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

#### CITY OF TORONTO ACT, 1996

Ms Bassett moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr55, An Act respecting the City of Toronto.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry? Carried.

Ms Bassett moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr55, An Act respecting the City of Toronto.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

#### LIONS FOUNDATION OF CANADA ACT, 1996

Mr Carr moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr58, An Act respecting the Lions Foundation of Canada.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Carr moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr58, An Act respecting the Lions Foundation of Canada.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.



## CITY OF KINGSTON ACT, 1996

Mrs Caplan, on behalf of Mr Gerretsen, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr59, An Act respecting the City of Kingston.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mrs Caplan, on behalf of Mr Gerretsen, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr59, An Act respecting the City of Kingston.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

## CITY OF BRANTFORD ACT, 1996

Mr Ron Johnson moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr60, An Act respecting the City of Brantford.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Ron Johnson moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr60, An Act respecting the City of Brantford.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

## TOWN OF RICHMOND HILL ACT, 1996

Mr Klees moved second reading of the following bill:  
Bill Pr61, An Act respecting the Town of Richmond Hill.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Klees moved third reading of the following bill:  
Bill Pr61, An Act respecting the Town of Richmond Hill.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

## DELZAP CONSTRUCTION LIMITED ACT, 1996

**Mr Chris Stockwell (Etobicoke West):** Considering that there are no NDP members left and that tough, hard-nosed position they took has obviously collapsed, I would then be honoured to move second reading of Bill Pr62, considering the absence of the socialist members in this Legislature.

Mr Stockwell moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr62, An Act to revive Delzap Construction Limited.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

**Interjection:** No.

**The Speaker:** All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

I declare the motion carried.

**Mr Stockwell:** I get to move third reading with one NDPer in the House, and we know full well it takes five of them to force a vote, so I'll continue. I'd like to move third reading of Bill Pr62.

Mr Stockwell moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr62, An Act to revive Delzap Construction Limited.

**The Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. It will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 2040 to 2100.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Order. Mr Stockwell has moved third reading of Bill Pr62. Those in favour, please rise one at a time.

## Ayes

Baird, John R.	Guzzo, Garry J.	Ross, Lillian
Bassett, Isabel	Hardeman, Ernie	Sampson, Rob
Bisson, Gilles	Harnick, Charles	Shea, Derwyn
Boyd, Marion	Johnson, David	Sheehan, Frank
Bradley, James J.	Johnson, Ron	Silipo, Tony
Brown, Jim	Klees, Frank	Skarica, Toni
Caplan, Elinor	Leach, Al	Smith, Bruce
Carr, Gary	Marchese, Rosario	Snobelen, John
Christopherson, David	Martel, Shelley	Spina, Joseph
Chudleigh, Ted	Maves, Bart	Stewart, R. Gary
Clement, Tony	Munro, Julia	Stockwell, Chris
Danford, Harry	Murdoch, Bill	Tascona, Joseph N.
Doyle, Ed	Parker, John L.	Turnbull, David
Elliott, Brenda	Pouliot, Gilles	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Eves, Ernie L.	Pupatello, Sandra	
Grimmett, Bill	Rollins, E.J. Douglas	

**The Deputy Speaker:** All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 46; the nays are zero.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I declare the bill passed.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and that it be named as in the motion.

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader):** Mr Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to move the following motions without notice.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Agreed? Agreed.

## MOTIONS

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader):** I move that the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly review and report on the matter of referenda as set out in the Ministry of Attorney General document to be filed with the clerk of the committee.



**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Is it the wish of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

Those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

The motion is carried.

#### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader):** I move that the standing committee on general government review and report on the matter of rent control, as set out in the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing consultation paper to be filed with the clerk of the committee.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Is it the wish of the House that the motion carry? It is carried.

#### COMMITTEE SITTINGS

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader):** I move that the following committees be authorized to meet during the summer adjournment in accordance with the schedule of meeting dates agreed to by the three party whips and tabled with the Clerk of the Assembly to examine and inquire into the following matters:

The standing committee on administration of justice to consider Bill 75, An Act to regulate alcohol and gaming in the public interest, to fund charities through the responsible management of video lotteries and to amend certain statutes related to liquor and gaming;

The standing committee on general government to consider the matter of rent control pursuant to the order of the House dated June 27, 1996, and Bill 52, An Act to promote resource development, conservation and environmental protection through the streamlining of regulatory processes and the enhancement of compliance measures in the Aggregate and Petroleum Industries;

The standing committee on government agencies to review intended appointments to the public sector;

The standing committee on the Legislative Assembly to consider the matter of referenda pursuant to the order of the House dated June 27, 1996;

The subcommittee of the standing committee on public accounts to adjourn to Victoria, British Columbia, to attend the annual meeting of the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees;

The standing committee on resources development to consider Bill 49, An Act to improve the Employment Standards Act;

The standing committee on social development to consider Bill 76, An Act to improve environmental protection, increase accountability and enshrine public consultation in the Environmental Assessment Act.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Debate?

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** It is a debatable motion and I intend to debate it; that is, the motion that deals with the committees that will be dealing with legislation that's been passed at this time.

First of all, the committee on administration of justice dealing with Bill 75, an act to regulate alcohol and

gaming in the public interest, it is absolutely essential for the people of this province to know that in fact this committee must deal with this this summer. The reason it is dealing with it is a very reasonable reason, and that is that we have had second reading of this particular bill; there has been discussion of it in principle. There has not been as widespread debate as I would like to have seen on the bill, because it essentially deals with VLTs, or video lottery terminals, which are in the opinion of the official opposition the most insidious and the most alluring kind of gambling that would attract those with addictions more than any other kind. This represents an escalation of the policy of gambling on the part of the government of Ontario, and for this reason it is our belief that this committee must hear from people across the province, both those who are in favour but, I would hope, many of those who are against. I would hope that the churches, who have had much to say about many issues that have come before the provincial and federal parliaments, would appear before the committee to make known their views on this escalation of gambling.

In addition to this, some of the other changes are reasonable. We'll want to hear from the public and from bar owners, for instance, on the merits of increased regulation of those whose bars operate without permission of local authorities or operate in a manner which is contrary to legislation and regulations that have been passed in this province.

Next, the standing committee on general government is considering the matter of rent control. The reason we wish to see this consultation taking place this summer is that we believe any legislation that is contemplated is much better legislation if the people of this province have a chance to look at the proposals that the government has in this regard.

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In terms of rent control, we in the opposition believe what is happening is that rent control is being removed by this legislation, or by the proposed legislation at the very least. It would be our hope that when the government hears the representations made by tenant groups, by landlords and by others, the legislation they were contemplating would be modified considerably in order that rent control would be remaining, particularly for those who are most vulnerable.

As we know, the legislation — or the proposed legislation, I should say again — will allow for the government of Ontario to permit landlords to raise rents in those units where people move out. This will be particularly onerous on students who rely on well-priced accommodation to be able to live in communities other than their own to attend community colleges or universities. In addition to this, we have many people who are unable to avoid moving for various reasons, whether it's to be closer to people or whether it's to move to another unit for health purposes, and for this reason we believe those people should have that chance.

You may wonder why it would be required to debate these matters. We spent an hour and a half this afternoon fooling around with bells when we should have been debating legislation. I believe this Legislature should be sitting till midnight tonight to deal with these matters. It's



obvious that it will not be, but I don't think it would have been necessary if we had been debating legislation this afternoon instead of ringing bells all afternoon. As a result, many members of the Liberal caucus who wanted to deal with a couple of the bills that were before the House, particularly the bill under the auspices of consumer and commercial relations, were unable to do so, and other members who wished to address certain matters before this House were unable to do so.

**Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt):** Except if they were going to be here until midnight, they should still be here.

**Mr Bradley:** Well, if you would like them to come back, I guess they can.

What has happened in this House today is that good, valuable time — there are valid reasons, good points that were raised in this House by members of this House, but as a result of other manoeuvres that have taken place today, much of the debating time has been lost. We have endeavoured to accommodate those who have other commitments, but I noticed in the last vote that we were not accommodating others who had made certain agreements.

I look at the standing committee on government agencies and note that it is going to be reviewing intended appointments to the public sector. This is an opportunity for those of us in the opposition and for government members to assess the credentials and qualifications of those who would be coming before that committee and making a determination of whether they should be endorsed.

The standing committee on the Legislative Assembly is to consider the matter of referenda. That is preferable to some of the other matters that the committee probably could be considering, matters which we in the opposition feel would be detrimental to the working of this House. But I might note that when you're considering referenda, one of the areas you might be considering is a referendum in this province on the introduction of video lottery terminals or electronic slot machines in bars and restaurants and other casinos — not the established casinos approved by the government at this time, but a multiplicity of casinos that will be across the province. So you'll have a widespread introduction of a new way of gambling with special access now being available to those people and it being endorsed by the government of Ontario.

The standing committee on public accounts will be attending the annual meeting of the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees, which is no doubt appropriate.

The standing committee on resources development is considering Bill 49, An Act to improve the Employment Standards Act. Again, those who have concerns about that should have that opportunity to appear. It is useful that committees have their hearings not only in the city of Toronto or the municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, but across the province.

The standing committee on social development will consider Bill 76, An Act to improve environmental protection, increase accountability and enshrine public consultation in the Environmental Assessment Act. The very title of that act is totally contradictory to what the bill actually does, in the opinion of the opposition, but we in the opposition did ask for and receive permission to

have hearings across the province, again so that both sides on this issue, those who feel the present legislation is too restrictive and those who feel it is not restrictive enough or adequate at this time, will be able to make representations.

Last, the standing committee on general government will be considering Bill 52, An Act to promote resource development, conservation and environmental protection through the streamlining of regulatory processes and the enhancement of compliance measures in the Aggregate and Petroleum Industries. The reason we in the opposition feel it's necessary to have these hearings — as well, the government House leader has been cooperative and has granted the request that there be hearings, not only in Metropolitan Toronto but in other locations such as Halton and Niagara — is so that we can assess the ramifications of this legislation.

It is appropriate that all of these committees meet this summer so that we can have the appropriate input. We know from Bill 26 what happens when we don't have adequate input from the public, particularly at an opportune time, that being before legislation is finally passed, or even better, as was the case — and I compliment the government on this — in automobile insurance, where consultation took place even before the legislation was presented.

We will be supporting the motion moved by Mr Eves this evening and look forward to the hearings this summer.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** All those in favour of Mr Eves's motion will say "aye."

All those opposed, if any, say "nay."

In my opinion, the motion carries.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader):** I move that committees be authorized to release their reports during the summer adjournment by depositing a copy of any report with the Clerk of the Assembly, and upon resumption of the meetings of the House, the chairs of such committees shall bring any such reports before the House in accordance with the standing orders.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

## MEETING OF THE HOUSE

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader):** I move that notwithstanding standing order 6(a)(ii), when the House adjourns today, it shall stand adjourned until Tuesday, September 24, 1996.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** Debate on the motion?

**Mrs Elinor Caplan (Oriole):** I'll speak very briefly on this. According to the House calendar, this House would normally return on September 23, which is the high holiday of Yom Kippur. I want to express my appreciation and the appreciation of my colleague Mr Kwinter that the government has decided to return on the 24th, which will allow us to attend the first day of the fall session.



I want to express my appreciation and say that I will be supporting this motion.

**The Speaker:** Further debate? All those in favour of the motion say "aye."

Opposed, if any, say "nay."

The motion is carried.

**Hon Mr Eves:** Mr Speaker, His Honour awaits.

2120

*His Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario entered the chamber of the Legislative Assembly and took his seat upon the throne.*

#### ROYAL ASSENT SANCTION ROYALE

**Hon Henry N.R. Jackman (Lieutenant Governor):** Pray be seated.

**The Speaker (Hon Allan K. McLean):** May it please Your Honour, the Legislative Assembly of the province has, at its present sittings thereof, passed certain bills to which, in the name of and on behalf of the said Legislative Assembly, I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

**Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees (Ms Deborah Deller):** The following are the titles of the bills to which Your Honour's assent is prayed:

Bill 30, An Act to establish the Education Quality and Accountability Office and to amend the Education Act with respect to the Assessment of Academic Achievement / *Projet de loi 30, Loi créant l'Office de la qualité et de la responsabilité en éducation et modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation en ce qui concerne l'évaluation du rendement scolaire*

Bill 31, An Act to establish the Ontario College of Teachers and to make related amendments to certain statutes / *Projet de loi 31, Loi créant l'Ordre des enseignants et des enseignantes de l'Ontario et apportant des modifications connexes à certaines lois*

Bill 34, An Act to amend the Education Act / *Projet de loi 34, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation*

Bill 36, An Act to amend certain acts administered by the Ministry of Natural Resources / *Projet de loi 36, Loi modifiant certaines lois appliquées par le ministère des Richesses naturelles*

Bill 38, An Act to amend the Toronto Islands Residential Community Stewardship Act, 1993 / *Projet de loi 38, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1993 sur l'administration de la zone résidentielle des îles de Toronto*

Bill 45, An Act to repeal the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education Act and transfer assets to the University of Toronto / *Projet de loi 45, Loi abrogeant la Loi sur l'Institut d'études pédagogiques de l'Ontario et transférant l'actif de l'Institut à l'Université de Toronto*

Bill 46, An Act to amend or revoke various statutes administered by or affecting the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and to enact other statutes administered by the Ministry / *Projet de loi 46, Loi modifiant ou abrogeant diverses lois appliquées par le ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ou qui touchent ce ministère, et visant à édicter d'autres lois appliquées par le ministère*

Bill 47, An Act to cut taxes, to stimulate economic growth and to implement other measures contained in the 1996 Budget / *Projet de loi 47, Loi visant à réduire les impôts, à stimuler la croissance économique et à mettre en oeuvre d'autres mesures mentionnées dans le budget de 1996*

Bill 54, An Act to provide for the delegation of the administration of certain designated statutes to designated administrative authorities and to provide for certain limitation periods in those statutes / *Projet de loi 54, Loi prévoyant la délégation de l'application de certaines lois désignées à des organismes d'application désignés et prévoyant certains délais de prescription dans ces lois*

Bill 55, An Act to promote road safety by implementing commercial trucking reforms, drinking and driving countermeasures and other aspects of Ontario's comprehensive road safety plan / *Projet de loi 55, Loi visant à promouvoir la sécurité routière pour la mise en oeuvre de mesures de réforme du camionnage, de contre-mesures visant l'alcool au volant et d'autres aspects du programme général de sécurité routière de l'Ontario*

Bill 59, An Act to provide Ontario drivers with fair, balanced and stable automobile insurance and to make other amendments related to insurance matters / *Projet de loi 59, Loi visant à offrir une assurance-automobile équitable, équilibrée et stable aux conducteurs ontariens et à apporter d'autres modifications portant sur des questions d'assurance*

Bill 71, An Act to encourage the financial support of Public Institutions by Individuals and the Private Sector through the establishment of Crown Foundations / *Projet de loi 71, Loi visant à encourager le soutien financier des établissements publics par les particuliers et le secteur privé grâce à la création de fondations de la Couronne*

Bill Pr34, An Act respecting City of Ottawa

Bill Pr45, An Act respecting Anglo Canada General Insurance Company

Bill Pr47, An Act respecting the City of Ottawa

Bill Pr48, An Act respecting the City of Ottawa

Bill Pr54, An Act respecting the City of Toronto

Bill Pr55, An Act respecting the City of Toronto

Bill Pr58, An Act respecting the Lions Foundation of Canada

Bill Pr59, An Act respecting the City of Kingston

Bill Pr60, An Act respecting the City of Brantford

Bill Pr61, An Act respecting the Town of Richmond Hill

Bill Pr62, An Act to revive Delzap Construction Limited.

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** In Her Majesty's name, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor doth assent to these bills.

Au nom de Sa Majesté, Son Honneur le lieutenant-gouverneur sanctionne ces projets de loi.

*His Honour was then pleased to retire.*

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance and Government House Leader):** I move adjournment of the House.

**The Speaker:** This House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock on September 24.

*The House adjourned at 2126.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO  
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

**Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Lt Col The Hon / L'hon Henry N.R. Jackman CM, KStJ, BA, LLB, LLD**

**Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Allan K. McLean**

**Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers**

**Senior Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Journals / Greffier adjoint principal et Greffier des journaux: Alex D. McFedries**

**Clerk Assistant and Clerk of Committees / Greffière adjointe et Greffière des comités: Deborah Deller**

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Agostino, Dominic	Hamilton East / -Est	L	
Arnott, Ted	Wellington	PC	
Baird, John R.	Nepean	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre du Travail
Barrett, Toby	Norfolk	PC	
Bartolucci, Rick	Sudbury	L	
Bassett, Isabel	St Andrew-St Patrick	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance, deputy government House leader / adjointe parlementaire du ministre des Finances, chef parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Beaubien, Marcel	Lambton	PC	parliamentary assistant (rural affairs) to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Affaires rurales) du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Bisson, Gilles	Cochrane South / -Sud	ND	
Boushy, Dave	Sarnia	PC	
Boyd, Marion	London Centre / -Centre	ND	
Bradley, James J.	St Catharines	L	deputy opposition leader, opposition House leader / chef adjoint de l'opposition, chef parlementaire de l'opposition
Brown, Jim	Scarborough West / -Ouest	PC	
Brown, Michael A.	Algoma-Manitoulin	L	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Caplan, Elinor	Oriole	L	chief opposition whip / whip en chef de l'opposition
Carr, Gary	Oakville South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / adjoint parlementaire du solliciteur général et du ministre des Services correctionnels
Carroll, Jack	Chatham-Kent	PC	
Castrilli, Annamarie	Downsview	L	
Chiarelli, Robert	Ottawa West / -Ouest	L	
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre / -Centre	ND	deputy New Democratic Party whip / whip adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Chudleigh, Ted	Halton North / -Nord	PC	
Churley, Marilyn	Riverdale	ND	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Cleary, John C.	Cornwall	L	
Clement, Tony	Brampton South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs
Colle, Mike	Oakwood	L	
Conway, Sean G.	Renfrew North / -Nord	L	
Cooke, David S.	Windsor-Riverside	ND	New Democratic Party House leader / chef parlementaire du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Cordiano, Joseph	Lawrence	L	
Crozier, Bruce	Essex South / -Sud	L	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
<b>Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne</b>	London North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Curling, Alvin	Scarborough North / -Nord	L	



Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Danford, Harry	Hastings-Peterborough	PC	parliamentary assistant (agriculture and food) to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire (secteurs Agriculture et Alimentation) du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
DeFaria, Carl	Mississauga East / -Est	PC	
Doyle, Ed	Wentworth East / -Est	PC	assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement
Duncan, Dwight	Windsor-Walkerville	L	
Ecker, Janet	Durham West / -Ouest	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services / adjointe parlementaire du ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
<b>Elliott, Hon / L'hon Brenda</b>	Guelph	PC	Minister of Environment and Energy / ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie
<b>Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L.</b>	Parry Sound	PC	Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance, government House leader / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Fisher, Barbara	Bruce	PC	
Flaherty, Jim	Durham Centre / -Centre	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Ford, Douglas B.	Etobicoke-Humber	PC	
Fox, Gary	Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings / Prince Edward-Lennox-Hastings-Sud	PC	
Froese, Tom	St Catharines-Brock	PC	
Galt, Doug	Northumberland	PC	parliamentary assistant (environment) to the Minister of Environment and Energy / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Environnement) de la ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie
Gerretsen, John	Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles	L	
Gilchrist, Steve	Scarborough East / -Est	PC	
Grandmaître, Bernard	Ottawa East / -Est	L	
Gravelle, Michael	Port Arthur	L	
Grimmett, Bill	Muskoka-Georgian Bay / Muskoka-Baie-Georgienne	PC	parliamentary assistant (tourism) to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Tourisme) du ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Guzzo, Garry J.	Ottawa-Rideau	PC	parliamentary assistant (energy) to the Minister of Environment and Energy / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Énergie) de la ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie
Hampton, Howard	Rainy River	ND	Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Hardeman, Ernie	Oxford	PC	parliamentary assistant (municipal affairs – rural) to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire (Affaires municipales – secteur rural) du ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles</b>	Willowdale	PC	Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
<b>Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D.</b>	Nipissing	PC	Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
Hastings, John	Etobicoke-Rexdale	PC	
<b>Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris</b>	Victoria-Haliburton	PC	Minister of Natural Resources, Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hoy, Pat	Essex-Kent	L	
Hudak, Tim	Niagara South / -Sud	PC	
<b>Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron</b>	Burlington South / -Sud	PC	Minister without Portfolio (Workers' Compensation Board) / ministre sans portefeuille (Commission des accidents du travail)
Johns, Helen	Huron	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health / adjointe parlementaire du ministre de la Santé



Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Johnson, Bert	Perth	PC	Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président de la Chambre et Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Johnson, Hon / L'hon David</b>	Don Mills	PC	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / président du Conseil de gestion
Johnson, Ron	Brantford	PC	
Jordan, W. Leo	Lanark-Renfrew	PC	deputy government whip / whip adjoint du gouvernement
Kells, Morley	Etobicoke-Lakeshore	PC	
Kennedy, Gerard	York South / -Sud	L	
Klees, Frank	York-Mackenzie	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Richesses naturelles
Kormos, Peter	Welland-Thorold	ND	
Kwinter, Monte	Wilson Heights	L	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell	L	
Lankin, Frances	Beaches-Woodbine	ND	chief New Democratic Party whip / whip en chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Laughren, Floyd	Nickel Belt	ND	deputy New Democratic Party leader / chef adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
<b>Leach, Hon / L'hon Al</b>	St George-St David	PC	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Leadston, Gary L.	Kitchener-Wilmot	PC	
Marchese, Rosario	Fort York	ND	
Marland, Margaret	Mississauga South / -Sud	PC	
Martel, Shelley	Sudbury East / -Est	ND	
Martin, Tony	Sault Ste Marie	ND	
Martiniuk, Gerry	Cambridge	PC	
Maves, Bart	Niagara Falls	PC	
McGuinty, Dalton	Ottawa South / -Sud	L	
<b>McLean, Hon / L'hon Allan K.</b>	Simcoe East / -Est	PC	Speaker / Président
McLeod, Lyn	Fort William	L	Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition
Miclash, Frank	Kenora	L	deputy opposition House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition
Morin, Gilles E.	Carleton East / -Est	L	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Munro, Julia	Durham-York	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Premier / adjointe parlementaire du premier ministre
Murdoch, Bill	Grey-Owen Sound	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines / adjoint parlementaire du ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
<b>Mushinski, Hon / L'hon Marilyn</b>	Scarborough-Ellesmere	PC	Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs
Newman, Dan	Scarborough Centre / -Centre	PC	parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for native affairs / adjoint parlementaire du ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
North, Peter	Elgin	Ind	
O'Toole, John R.	Durham East / -Est	PC	
Ouellette, Jerry J.	Oshawa	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Transports
<b>Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al</b>	York Centre / -Centre	PC	Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Parker, John L.	York East / -Est	PC	
Patten, Richard	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	L	
Pettit, Trevor	Hamilton Mountain	PC	
Phillips, Gerry	Scarborough-Agincourt	L	
Pouliot, Gilles	Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon	ND	
Preston, Peter L.	Brant-Haldimand	PC	
Pupatello, Sandra	Windsor-Sandwich	L	



Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Ramsay, David	Timiskaming	L	
Rollins, E.J. Douglas	Quinte	PC	
Ross, Lillian	Hamilton West / -Ouest	PC	assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement
<b>Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W.</b>	Leeds-Grenville	PC	Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / solliciteur général et ministre des Services correctionnels
Ruprecht, Tony	Parkdale	L	
Sampson, Rob	Mississauga West / -Ouest	PC	parliamentary assistant (financial institutions) to the Minister of Finance / adjoint parlementaire (institutions financières) du ministre des Finances
<b>Saunderson, Hon / L'hon William</b>	Eglinton	PC	Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Sergio, Mario	Yorkview	L	
Shea, Derwyn	High Park-Swansea	PC	parliamentary assistant (municipal affairs – urban) to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire (Affaires municipales – secteur urbain) du ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Sheehan, Frank	Lincoln	PC	
Silipo, Tony	Dovercourt	ND	deputy New Democratic Party House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Skarica, Toni	Wentworth North / -Nord	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education and Training / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Smith, Bruce	Middlesex	PC	
<b>Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John</b>	Mississauga North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Education and Training / ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Spina, Joseph	Brampton North / -Nord	PC	parliamentary assistant (small business) to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire (secteur petites entreprises) du ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
<b>Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W.</b>	Carleton	PC	Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Stewart, R. Gary	Peterborough	PC	
Stockwell, Chris	Etobicoke West / -Ouest	PC	
Tascona, Joseph N.	Simcoe Centre / -Centre	PC	
Tilson, David	Dufferin-Peel	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General / adjoint parlementaire du procureur général
<b>Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H.</b>	Markham	PC	Minister of Community and Social Services / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Turnbull, David	York Mills	PC	chief government whip / whip en chef du gouvernement
Vankoughnet, Bill	Frontenac-Addington	Ind	
<b>Villeneuve, Hon / L'hon Noble</b>	S-D-G & East Grenville / S-D-G et Grenville-Est	PC	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones
Wettlaufer, Wayne	Kitchener	PC	assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement
Wildman, Bud	Algoma	ND	
<b>Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim</b>	Simcoe West / -Ouest	PC	Minister of Health / ministre de la Santé
<b>Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth</b>	Waterloo North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Wood, Bob	London South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / adjoint parlementaire du président du Conseil de gestion
Wood, Len	Cochrane North / -Nord	ND	
Young, Terence H.	Halton Centre / -Centre	PC	parliamentary assistant (colleges and universities) to the Minister of Education and Training / adjoint parlementaire (secteur collèges et universités) du ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation



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Tim Hudak, Ron Johnson, Frank Klees,  
Gary L. Leadston, Gerry Martiniuk, John L. Parker,  
David Ramsay, David Tilson  
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Frank Sheehan, Wayne Wettlaufer  
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Finances et affaires économiques**

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Ted Chudleigh, Douglas B. Ford, Tim Hudak,  
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Bernard Grandmaître, Ernie Hardeman, Rosario Marchese  
Bart Maves, Sandra Papatello, Lillian Ross  
Mario Sergio, R. Gary Stewart, Joseph N. Tascona,  
Len Wood, Terence H. Young  
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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tony Martin  
Rick Bartolucci, Bruce Crozier, Ed Doyle,  
Douglas B. Ford, Gary Fox, Michael Gravelle,  
Bert Johnson, Peter Kormos, Floyd Laughren,  
Gary L. Leadston, Tony Martin, Dan Newman,  
Peter L. Preston, Bob Wood  
Clerk / Greffière: Tannis Manikel

**Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Ted Arnott  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: John Hastings  
Ted Arnott, Rick Bartolucci, Dave Boushy, David S. Cooke,  
Carl DeFaria, Tom Froese, Bill Grimmett, John Hastings,  
Ron Johnson, Frank Miclash, Gilles E. Morin,  
John R. O'Toole, Tony Silipo, R. Gary Stewart  
Clerk / Greffière: Lisa Freedman

**Ombudsman**

Chair / Président: John L. Parker  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tom Froese  
Elinor Caplan, Carl DeFaria, Barbara Fisher, Tom Froese,  
Doug Galt, Pat Hoy, W. Leo Jordan, Jean-Marc Lalonde,  
Rosario Marchese, Margaret Marland, John L. Parker,  
R. Gary Stewart, Chris Stockwell, Len Wood  
Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Mike Colle  
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Gary Carr, Mike Colle, Bruce Crozier, Gary Fox,  
Steve Gilchrist, John Hastings, Gerard Kennedy  
Shelley Martel, Dalton McGuinty, Gilles Pouliot,  
Toni Skarica  
Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker

**Regulations and private bills /  
Règlements et projets de loi privés**

Chair / Président: Toby Barrett  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Bruce Smith  
Toby Barrett, Gilles Bisson, Dave Boushy, John Hastings,  
John R. O'Toole, Trevor Pettit, Gilles Pouliot,  
Sandra Papatello, E.J. Douglas Rollins, Tony Ruprecht,  
Mario Sergio, Derwyn Shea, Frank Sheehan, Bruce Smith  
Clerk / Greffière: Lisa Freedman

**Resources development /  
Développement des ressources**

Chair / Président: Steve Gilchrist  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Barbara Fisher  
John R. Baird, Jack Carroll, David Christopherson,  
Ted Chudleigh, Marilyn Churley, Dwight Duncan,  
Barbara Fisher, Steve Gilchrist, Pat Hoy,  
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Bart Maves, Bill Murdoch,  
Jerry J. Ouellette, Joseph N. Tascona  
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Social development / Affaires sociales**

Chair / Président: Richard Patten  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: John Gerretsen  
Janet Ecker, John Gerretsen, Michael Gravelle,  
Helen Johns, W. Leo Jordan, Gerard Kennedy,  
Floyd Laughren, Julia Munro, Dan Newman,  
Richard Patten, Trevor Pettit, Peter L. Preston,  
Bruce Smith, Bud Wildman  
Clerk / Greffière: Lynn Mellor

These lists appear in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month. A list arranged by riding appears when space permits.

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